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Will They Get There in Time?

One of the most dramatic and important races in all history is now taking place in the Eastern Mediterranean and Africa. The British forces have already conquered most of Ethiopia, including Addis Ababa, the capital. They must, however, put down the final scattered remants of Italian resistance. But in the meantime, German-Italian forces are advancing eastward along the North African shore toward Egypt; they are enabled to do so because a large part of General Wavell's men and materials have been withdrawn and sent to Greece. They are desperately needed there to help both the Greeks and the Yugoslavs to meet the German onslaught. Can the Ethiopian campaign be ended, first, before the rainy season begins, and second, in time to send most of the British forces north to protect Egypt and to supplement the aid already being given to Greece and Yugoslavia? It is a question on which may depend, in large part, the future of the world.

What Does Stalin Mean to Do?

As Hitler struck at Yugoslavia and Greece the great enigma was the meaning of Russia's last-minute treaty of friendship with Yugoslavia. Americans are so eager to see signs of any setback to Germany that they are saying perhaps the Russian bear finally intends to take a stand against the one European country which is most dangerous to its future—or at least to stop giving so many supplies to that potential enemy. It may be that Stalin has at last decided to assert himself; but we see no evidence of it. If he had said a word in time, Bulgaria also might have stood out against Hitler; he waited until the deed was practically completed and then told the Bulgars he sympathized with them. The case of Yugoslavia is the same. A firm announcement by Russia would probably have prevented the attack; but no word was forthcoming until it was obvious to all the world that the assault was imminent. In the case of these two countries, all Stalin has done has been to dissociate himself—for the record—from Hitler's steamroller. There is no guarantee that his promises to Turkey, whatever those promises may be, will have any validity—except in so far as Stalin may feel that Germany in Turkey is far more dangerous to him than Germany in Greece, Bulgaria and the rest of the Balkans—and except also as he may feel that he is strong enough to speak out against a state which he has helped to strengthen since August, 1939.

On Hating the Unions

A wave of anger against labor unions is rising throughout the United States. One can see it in ugly newspaper headlines, in the ostentatious "playing up" of strike news, in the hissing of newsreels showing pickets, when displayed in theatres in middle-class areas. Much of this animosity of course comes from sources that have always been hostile; labor haters in Congress and among employers are seeking to use the defense emergency to break down the development of unionism seen in recent years. We are not suggesting that every labor leader is a little plaster saint, or that some unions have not been unreasonable in their demands. We would emphasize a few points, however:

1. Secretary Perkins has statistical support for her

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statement that there are fewer strikes today than there were in 1917 when the nation was actually at war. 2. In several important cases, the strikers have offered to keep men at work on defense materials if the settlement could in their case be retroactive to the date of the strike; the employers have refused these offers in order to be able to say that the strikers were endangering the country. 3. Most of the firms engaged in defense contracts are making fat profits, and labor is well aware of this. In an era of rising prices, it is only natural and reasonable that the laboring man should ask that his share of the dollar earned should not be lessened, and that he should use the weapon of the strike when he is forced to. 4. The public forgets that one great strike after another has been settled in the last few weeks and that the remaining ones probably will be.

The Problem of Mr. Knudsen

William S. Knudsen is such an honest man that his Army Day speech at the Waldorf-Astoria is doubly illuminating. In language as quaint and unassuming as his bow, the head of the OPM reported on defense production. With small arms and .50-caliber machine guns everything is fine. With airplanes, tanks and explosives everything is fine too, although these are behind schedule. The aluminum and magnesium people are doing such great things that they are worth singling out for mention. The Army and Navy Departments and the OPM are full of fine fellows.

Of course there's a big job ahead. Schedules will have to be upped 100 to 1,000 percent. We shall all have to sacrifice. Since business already has the contracts signed and sealed and a good share of the money in the bank, it obviously is in no position to sacrifice. That leaves—labor. Mr. Knudsen put labor in its place. "Strikes like the Lackawanna, International Harvester and Bethlehem at Johnstown, and Ford are purely for the purpose of speeding up the union organization effort in the plants," he explained. By plain implication, patriots like Eugene Grace and Henry Ford and Max Babb of Allis-Chalmers (and of the America First Committee) are right in opposing such selfishness, whether they thereby violate the law or not.

This man, grown rich in the employ of Ford and Sloan and duPont, sees labor problems a trifle too simply. He sees also that the new mediation board is almost certain to fail. "The problem is to hold the rise [of wages] in proportion to the rise of living costs, and prevent a spiral from which it is extremely hard to recover." Mr. Knudsen is coming to be a real problem in labor relations and defense production.

Henry Ford and the Law

How little federal law means to Henry Ford is illustrated by the first of his NLRB cases. The complaint was filed by the UAW in June, 1937. On January 7, 1939, the board filed a petition for enforcement in circuit court. The board then asked to withdraw its order to satisfy Ford's objections on precedure. Ford was opposed to this too. By the time the board fought the case victoriously through the Supreme Court, almost four years had elapsed since the crimes (including the beatings of May 26, 1937) had been committed, and eighteen legal steps had been taken. During this time Ford had gone his anarchistic way, piling up more work for the NLRB. The board subsequently found him guilty of various terrorisms and repressions, including firings for union membership, floggings and tar-and-featherings, at plants at Highland Park, River Rouge, Long Beach, St. Louis, Buffalo, Dallas, Richmond (California), Detroit and Somerville, Massachusetts.

About all the labor laws have cost Ford are the fees for his attorneys, and these worthies he probably considers cheap help. Through them Ford is able to spout his venom at everyone with comparative immunity. With their help he has kept out the law and the union, paid lower wages than his competitors, and continued to get millions in both peacetime and defense business from the government. Through them also he has now got a federal injunction against the union, although this would seem to be contrary to the Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Act on at least two major counts: (1) that Ford had not obeyed other labor laws and has not made reasonable efforts to settle the controversy by negotiation; and (2) that local and state authorities have not proved incapable of coping with the situation.

The New British Budget

What the war means in financial terms to the English is shown by the new budget just introduced. The basic tax rate is now 50 percent, but of course the levy is much heavier than that on people of wealth. A man with an income of $264,000, for example, will pay $239,000 in taxes of various sorts, and have $25,000 left to live on. No tears need be shed for his predicament; but the privation enforced upon people with much smaller incomes is in the same scale. Even a man with an income of $4,000 pays a tax of about $1,500.

The most startling aspect of the budget is the adoption of the famous plan of John Maynard Keynes for compulsory saving. Under this scheme, a certain proportion of the total tax paid (equaling the amount by which exemptions have been reduced) will be earmarked for the taxpayer in a postal-savings account and returned to him at the end of the war. The important purpose of this plan is of course to reduce the expenditures for consumers' goods and thereby keep down their production. This both releases men and machinery for wartime purposes and, by preventing consumers from bidding against each other for limited quantities of supplies, acts as a preventive of inflation. It is a sweeping and dramatic fiscal experiment that will be watched with great interest all over the world.

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A New Opposition?

An interesting matter that has gone almost unnoticed in this country is Churchill's suggestion of last month that an official opposition be formed in the House of Commons. Replying to a member who pointed out the difficulties of arranging debates now that all parties were in the government, Churchill said that if "a sufficient body of gentlemen" would constitute themselves an Opposition, "they could be definitely recognized as such." There appears to be a strong possibility that such an Opposition will come into being, and The New Statesman has suggested that it would be led by such as Emanuel Shinwell, Hore-Belisha, Lloyd George, Aneurin Bevan and others. It would be an interesting development and one would like to know why Mr. Churchill, who had already asked for "unity" both during and after the war, should be the man to make the suggestion. It is possible that he believes the birth of a new Opposition would serve to consolidate the present all-party set-up: Conservative, Labor and Liberal members now in the government would perhaps be drawn closer and more lastingly together if they were obliged to face equally the criticism of an all-party Opposition. Certainly, efficient conduct of the war would be helped considerably by such an energetic and critical "body of gentlemen."

Maldistribution of Gravy

In the days when the army was frightening its appropriations out of Congress, we used to hear that if an enemy sank our navy we should defend our coasts only long enough to withdraw behind the Rockies and Appalachians. If it should soon come to such a pass, America would be making its last stand backed with butter but not guns. For it is on the coastal plains whose defense the army contemplates with such melancholy that our armaments are being massed. A WPA survey found that 73 percent of defense orders to January 1 had gone to twenty industrial areas containing only 22 percent of the population. The TNEC says 45 percent, or $13,000,000,000 worth of defense contracts, went to six closely interrelated corporate groups. The CIO's monthly business survey reports that two financial groups controlling eight companies got 23 percent of all orders, that six groups controlling nineteen companies had 44 percent and sixteen groups controlling twenty-nine companies had 62.5 percent. Eighty concerns, by this computation, have 85 percent of the business. This corporate monopoly contributes to geographic maldistribution, since not only conversion of plant potential but new plant is being crowded into a relatively few square miles on the East and West Coasts. Bethlehem Steel and the duPont empire, each with more than a billion in orders, hire men and use machines in only a few overcrowded communities, while throughout the vast Mississippi basin thousands of lathes and men stand idle. These facts help explain why so much of America looks upon defense as somebody else's private picnic, and why the dollar-a-year men are the most highly overpaid people in Washington.

Pétain and North Africa

Marshal Pétain's recent radio address to the French people was a nicely balanced mixture of threat and friendship. The honor of France, he said, forbade her to take hostile action against Great Britain, but the integrity of France demanded that her imported supplies of foodstuffs and their sources be protected. Where honor leaves off and integrity begins, we are not told; presumably the Marshal preferred a statement reflecting an uncertain motion down the middle of the road. It is probable that his position as chief of a semi-independent state has weakened in recent months. Previously he had the threat of General Weygand and the North African army to balance an Axis threat to absorb the whole of France. There are growing rumors that Pétain has lost this powerful bargaining card. We hear less of the North African army as a fighting force and more of it as a disarmed body of men lacking supplies and fuel and under the indirect control of a German, rather than an Italian, armistice commission. We hear, even more disturbingly, of German infiltration into the ports of Dakar and Casablanca —ideal points for attack on the British Cape of Good Hope line of shipping. It is of great importance that these reports be somehow confirmed or denied; we are very largely in the dark regarding this aspect of the war. All we can safely say at the moment is that Pétain's future actions at home will continue to be a clue to his position in North Africa.

Galileo Grey

Mr. Charles Grey, co-editor of "Jane's All the World's Aircraft," has set British officials back on their heels with his scathing remarks on United States aid to Britain and his reproduction in "Jane's" of a photograph of an American plane being towed into Canada by horses. We are told that Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Churchill were scandalized and that the official censors who let the rebel yell be heard got a terrible bawling out. To Americans, possibly the most surprising side of the affair is the force with which it drives home the general harmony of Anglo-American relations at the present time. A few hot words from an angry man of small importance are thrown into shocking relief against a background of two hearts pierced with an arrow of immortal devotion. The situation is far more ludicrous than it is unfortunate. From the safety of this continent we should intercede for Mr. Grey—a rebel whose persecution would do more harm than good in the years to come. He will have to retract his heresy, but we like to picture him turning away from his judges and muttering: "Nevertheless, the aid does *not* move."

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News Notes of a Week

The RAF went into action against German troops driving toward the Vardar River, north of the Greek frontier. Yugoslavs were reported to have invaded Hungary. . . . Vatican City sent out a story that the Pope and Matsuoka discussed the question of including peace proposals in the Pope's Easter speech.

Secretary Hull demanded the recall of the Italian naval attaché for complicity in the sabotaging of Italian ships and rejected with a good deal of emphasis the German and Italian notes of protest over the seizing of the freighters. . . . FDR let his press conference understand that convoying of merchant ships by the United States navy was not impossible, and that the legalizing of Red Sea waters for United States commerce was probable. Fletcher Pratt, The New York Post's military expert, wrote that the production of small submarine chasers, rather than the employment of heavy destroyers, was the way this country could most effectively help Britain in the Battle of the Atlantic. . . . Operators of coal mines in the East came to terms with John L. Lewis and the UMW. Southern operators have not. . . . The U. S. Steel Corporation and CIO leaders agreed to extend contract negotiations for a week, averting the strike. The National Steel Company granted a wage increase of ten cents an hour, the amount the CIO asks from Big Steel. . . . Plane production was 1,216 in March, 244 more than in February, 180 more than in January. . . . President Roosevelt allotted $500,000,000 from the lease-lend appropriation for the construction of 212 cargo ships and 56 shipways. . . . The German press blamed Yugoslavia's intransigence on the United States. The 750-mile battle line, from Yugoslavia to Thrace, seemed pretty close to home to most Americans.

Hitler's New Gamble

WHETHER OR NOT Hitler planned it that way—and he certainly did not intend that Yugoslavia should be among his enemies—the Balkan campaign is now the major theatre of war. What happens there will be only less decisive in its consequences than the Battle of the Atlantic. Indeed, in one sense the activity in the Balkans is more crucial for the Axis. The Allies, by keeping the seaways open, cannot defeat Hitler, but can only save themselves from conquest. If they could win in Southeastern Europe, however, they would have gone a long way toward winning the war. Anything less than complete German dominance in this area would constitute a setback for the Nazis.

Hitler was faced by a sharp alternative: he could either keep hostilities out of Southeastern Europe altogether by the threat of superior power, or he could assimilate it to his regime by a short and decisive struggle. Both strategic and economic considerations, with their close interaction, dictate these conditions of his success.

First of all, the imperial tradition of *Drang nach Osten,* of Berlin-Bagdad, which is by no means forgotten in the Nazi scheme of conquest, demands that this route be kept open both for trade and for political penetration to the East and possibly to Africa as well. It is the only parallel to Britain's control of the Mediterranean and Suez, if there be added to it the Dardanelles and Turkey. Even if Germany were to wrest from Britain the traditional sea route, she could not seize or hold it without a secure base of operations on the Balkan Peninsula.

This is the pathway to the oil of Irak and Iran, the rich trade of India and beyond. No dream of imperial world domination by a central European power would be complete without it. We may be sure that German ambitions have taken it into account, and that if Yugoslavia and Greece are conquered, Turkey will be next in line. All this, however, might wait until after the defeat of Britain at home. The Third Reich does not need the supplies it could obtain over this historic trade route in order to continue the war. It is an ultimate and expansionist aim rather than an immediate necessity.

It is essential, however, that Germany under the blockade should have an uninterrupted supply of grains and other foodstuffs from the Danube Valley; she has been deriving an important quota from Yugoslavia as well as from Rumania and Hungary. Germany must also safeguard her flow of oil from the Rumanian fields, and would shortly feel the loss of bauxite—the raw material of aluminum—and copper from Yugoslavia as well as other minerals from the mountains. For these reasons she will strain every nerve to keep the Balkans pacified. Previously she has done so by power politics; now she can do so, if at all, only as the result of open warfare, which while it exists is far more injurious to production and trade. The longer the campaign lasts, the longer will be the interruption of the flow of materials, and the greater will be the danger of their permanent loss, through air bombings or otherwise.

Another grave risk the Nazis must take is the very existence of an active front which consumes military supplies. The effectiveness of the blockade depends largely upon the speed with which Germany approaches a shortage in critical materials. Calculations based on the last war scarcely apply as long as the German army is not compelled to spend its substance in active fighting. So far, the land campaigns in this war have been swift and economical, involving a minimum wastage of men, equipment and supplies on the part of the victor. We may be sure that Germany has accumulated adequate reserves for another such campaign this spring, and did not expect to have to draw

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heavily upon them in order to subdue Greece. With Yugoslavia in the war as well, however, and the possibility of having to deal with Turkey on the other flank if the hostilities are not quickly ended, there arises the possibility of major action over a wide front, which, if it is long continued, will certainly provide a heavier drain on war resources than Germany had expected. This is another reason why lack of a prompt and complete victory on her part, even if she achieves a measure of military success, will constitute a weakening of her long-term position. Hitler cannot be defeated without at least a minimum of exhaustion in continental warfare.

There are also important considerations of strictly military strategy. If the Allies are to carry out an offensive against their enemy—and without offensive action they could hardly expect more than a draw—they must have a foothold on the Continent. On the Western front they have at least temporarily been pushed beyond the sea. While they may be able at some time in the future to reëstablish this front by invasion—an invasion which would have the tremendous advantage of encountering friendly rather than hostile populations—they could do so only with the greatest difficulty if the German army were permitted to concentrate its major strength against them. But in order to be free to deal with such an offensive, Hitler must have his back door securely locked and bolted. He has been industrious in doing so—first by his accord with the Soviet Union and his campaign against Poland, and recently by his moves in the Balkans. But Greece and Yugoslavia now have their feet in the crack, with Britain and Turkey looming behind them. The existence of fighting in the Balkans does not yet face Hitler with his chief dread—a war on two fronts—since there is no land front in the west. But unless he can forcibly pacify the region as he has Western Europe, the future possibility of two fronts is greatly increased, whenever the Allies have sufficiently built up their strength to undertake the enterprise.

Finally, there is the stake of prestige. So far, the army of the Third Reich has appeared to be invincible. Nobody has been able to stand long against it. Part of that prestige departed when Greece and Yugoslavia, after having seen what happened to a round dozen of other nations, decided to defy it. Hitler must erase that loss quickly, for the sake of the effect both in the rest of the world and in Germany. If he has serious trouble in subduing his brave new opponents, a fissure will open at the base of his imposing structure, which to many will seem to portend its ultimate destruction. Those who have been immobilized mainly by fear—and they cover a large part of Europe—will be one step nearer to revolt.

The consequence of all this is that Hitler must win the Battle of the Balkans quickly and decisively in order to make secure his previous victory. If he does so, the improvement in the chances of the Allies which appeared this winter will be almost canceled. If he does not do so, even though he suffers no serious defeats in the field, he will have begun to lose the war.

Virginia Woolf

THERE IS no living writer whose style can approach Virginia Woolf's for sheer breathtaking beauty and perfection of phrasing. Yet behind this wit and brilliance are passionate intensity, pathos, the acute loneliness that is the inevitable fate of a great artist, and which comes from the desire to expand beyond the frontiers of daily life, ever looking for something in this world which is to be found, if at all, in no satisfying degree.

Few readers of the novel are willing to make the extra effort in feeling that is necessary if Virginia Woolf is to be rightly understood. Her novels make a demand on the reader like that of poetry of the first order; her prose rhythms are complex and subtle; she has the poet's power to condense—she gives us the states of being of her characters rather than the sequence of events which makes up their lives: past, present and future often merge into one significant moment, showing us that all their lives have been lived for this moment alone. The characters seem to be carried backward and forward on the tide of some inescapable destiny. The vision is always there, though the habits and realities of the physical world continually obscure it.

Virginia Woolf made daring innovations in the art of the novel; she gave us new revelations about the workings of the human heart; she illuminated for us all she saw, all that has seemed transparent for a moment. The source of this illumination is that in reading her we are "thinking with the unlimited time of the mind"—we are immersed in the inexhaustible beauty of the English language brought to a new perfection by this great artist.

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Germany's Balkan War

Mr. Fodor was for years the Vienna correspondent of The Manchester Guardian and The Chicago Daily News and is one of the outstanding authorities on the Balkans. When he assumes the robes of the prophet, he of course does so on his own authority and at his own risk. – THE EDITORS

"THE BALKANS are not worth the bones of a single Prussian guardsman," said Bismarck when some of his friends tried to urge him to intervene in the chaotic affairs of Southeastern Europe. Bismarck's picture was on the frontispiece of the single book which constituted the library of Hitler's father and the book undoubtedly shaped the mental development of the boy Adolf. I can see Winston Churchill rubbing his hands with satisfaction when Hitler disregarded his own hero's advice.

If in this connection history was disregarded, it is amazing to note how the mistakes of history are being repeated in other directions. King Boris of Bulgaria decided, as a lesson of the last war, to keep Bulgaria out of this one. But Bulgaria is again on the side of the German colossus. The German General Staff, after the last World War, made a thorough study of the causes of Germany's defeat. Hitler may assert for demagogical purposes that Germany was defeated because she was stabbed in the back by democrats, liberals and Jews, but the exacting and scientifically thinking German General Staff came to other conclusions. The two chief reasons for the defeat of 1918, according to these deductions of the German General Staff, were, first, that Germany became engaged in a two-front war, despite the warning of all German strategical experts, and, second, that she wasted too many troops in secondary and tertiary theatres of war, aiding weak allies.

When this war started in September, 1939, Hitler was determined to avoid a two-front war. In November, 1938, I reported to my papers that Ribbentrop had offered a non-aggression pact to Russia, and that as a price for this neutrality in case of a Western European war Russia would get Finland and Estonia, while Germany would take Latvia and Lithuania. So anxious was Hitler to neutralize Russia that he even gave her Latvia and Lithuania. All this to avoid a two-front war!

Many people will say that in this war Germany needs no such huge armies as she did in 1914-18. True. But this time she has no such huge armies at her disposal. As this war has so far been mainly a war of industrial production, Germany, at the beginning of this year, had mobilized only 4,000,000 soldiers. The others were fighting the war in the factories. Of these 4,000,000 men, almost half are engaged in police duty in the occupied countries or are standing vigil on the Russian frontier. The actual fighting forces are far inferior to those of the last war, though they are highly mechanized. (I estimate the German mechanized divisions at twenty.)

Germany will have to split her air force to send an adequate number of planes to the Balkans. Only with the help of the air arm is a blitzkrieg possible. This will give Britain's air force in Western Europe a much better chance against the German airmen than it now possesses. For the duration of the Balkan campaign an invasion of England is probably impossible.

No one can foretell how the campaign against Yugoslavia and Greece will end, but precedents in Finland lead us to believe that sooner or later Germany can conquer Yugoslavia. She conquered Yugoslavia in the last war; but the Yugoslav troops brought to Salonika two years later started an offensive against the Central Powers which was the turning point of the war.

This is the fact which compelled Hitler to disregard the advice of Bismarck and to engage the German armies in the southeast. Hitler regards Churchill as his arch-enemy. And was it not Churchill who tried to create an additional theatre of war for Germany, who tried to stab Germany in the back from the Dardanelles in 1915? And was it not the influence of Churchill which created the Salonika front in 1917-18?

Hitler was faced with a great dilemma. He knew that England could be defeated only at home, and nowhere else. But he feared that if he should attack England this summer, Churchill might again fall upon him in the Balkans. The Germans started an offensive in March, 1918, which almost brought them to Paris. If they had continued this push, the Western front would probably have been broken. But in the summer of 1918, General Franchet d'Esperey's troops in Salonika started a drive against Bulgaria and the defeat of this weak ally brought to a halt the German offensive in the West. In July, 1918, the Allies started an offensive which finally broke Germany's power. But the mortal wound came from Salonika. This was what Hitler had to prevent in the present war.

Prestige was the determining factor. The Yugoslav defiance was a vital blow to that. Yet I believe that Hitler might have overlooked the Yugoslav blow to his prestige, if the United States had not defied him at the same time. Immediate punishment of the American offender was impossible, and so the country which was near had to bear the brunt of his fury.

England's fate is now to a great extent in the hands of Yugoslavia and Greece. If the two are able to withstand Germany until October, Germany has lost the war.

M. W. FODOR

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To Avoid Inflation

LIKE MOST THINGS that people fear, inflation is as a rule vaguely defined. Those who have felt the greatest trepidation about it during the past five or six years have revealed that they do not understand what its causes are and how it may be prevented. On one point only they are well informed —its disturbing effects while it is in process, and the still more unpleasant consequences when it gives way to deflation. If this difficulty should pile a Pelion of monetary dislocation on the Ossa of post-war reconstruction which we shall have to confront in any event, we may never dig ourselves out.

This is a problem the consideration of which we can even less afford to postpone than other puzzles of readjustment. For what happens to prices, money and credit after Hitler will depend largely on what happens to them while we are still struggling with him. It is almost impossible for any nation to avoid deflation and depression, once inflation has gained headway.

The common errors concerning inflation had better be crossed off at the beginning. Abandonment or modification of the gold standard need not cause it. Knowledge that one cannot take paper money to the bank and receive gold or silver coin in exchange has little to do with it. It does not result automatically from even the hugest conceivable public debt or long continued government borrowing. Nor does the mere existence of enormous bank reserves as a base for credit lead to it. It was on one or other of these grounds that financial conservatives predicted imminent inflation all through the New Deal years, and yet none occurred.

One symptom of inflation is rapidly rising prices, continuing over a considerable period. Even this criterion, however, is deceptive. Not every price advance is inflationary. Slow increase in the price level is nothing to worry about. Even a swift one may be self-correcting in a short time, or it may merely reflect an increase in costs, in which case it is not so likely to get out of control. On the other hand, serious inflation can occur in concealed forms or in limited areas of the economy, and so pass unnoticed until it is too late. Many economists were not worried about the stability of prosperity in 1928 and 1929, merely because there was no marked increase in wholesale prices or the cost of living. Yet all the while there was virulent inflation in two critical sectors—real estate and the stock market. And some economists believe that there was also a *concealed* inflation in the prices of manufactured goods, since, although their prices were not rising markedly, their costs were falling; thus, margins of profit were growing exactly as if there were an inflationary price rise.

In order to have even a rudimentary understanding of the subject it is necessary to consider not merely money and prices, but the volume of goods and services for which money is exchanged. So long as production of goods is increasing, and is increasing in some fairly stable ratio to the growth of the money income of the people, the peril of inflation is slight. But the danger point is reached when the increase of output slows down or stops. If, then, prices go on rising, it means that money income is not linked any more to the stream of goods and services. People are getting more money, and since they cannot buy more goods with it, they are using it merely to bid up the prices of the goods that are available. Noticing that prices go up, they buy all the more rapidly. The buying puts the prices up; the rising prices stimulate the buying. Thus the celebrated inflation spiral is started. It goes on up until either the money supply gives out or confidence is undermined for some reason. Then the speculative balloon is punctured and dives to earth.

Speculative profits arising, not from increased volume but from increased prices, is the fever symptom of true inflation. This speculation may occur in stocks, in land and buildings, in materials like cotton or copper, or in ordinary processed or manufactured goods. Manufacturers speculate when they build up their inventories of materials because they expect rising prices. They derive speculative profits when these materials, having been made into the articles that they sell, are disposed of at a higher price level.

It is thus clear why, in spite of tampering with the gold standard, large governmental spending and huge bank reserves, we have not had inflation in recent years. First, though plenty of money existed in the banks and more could readily be created, it was not being used fully or spent rapidly. Second, there was nothing to stop increase of production as soon as any demand for it appeared on the markets. We had an immense unused productive capacity in almost every branch of industry and agriculture. Any little speculative flurry would soon attract more goods for sale. The growth of supply damped down price advances.

And that is why we now have to look out for inflation. Defense spending dwarfs relief spending. Already we have temporarily reached the limits of productive capacity in numerous defense industries. Some raw materials are running short. Money is being poured out to private citizens in increased profits and wages, and they in turn increase the demand for goods. But the capacity to produce goods for civilian consumption as well as for defense may, in numerous lines, reach its limit, in view of the diversion of resources to making goods for the army and navy.

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There are three good methods of avoiding inflationary excesses in a time like this, and if they are used in combination, the danger can be minimized.

1. The first and most important is to *increase productive capacity* so that the greatly enlarged stream of income may not run headlong into a restricted supply of goods. This should be done both in defense industries and in industries serving civilian demands. The more extensively and rapidly such increase is accomplished, the further away will be the danger point where inflation begins. We need not assume that the capacity with which we started is the limiting factor. There is no physical obstacle to increased capacity except the supply of raw materials, the amount and effectiveness of labor, and the state of technical efficiency. All these, in turn, are capable of a good deal of stretching. It is quite possible that, with the exception of a few temporary bottlenecks, we could so expand output as to provide all military requirements and civilian demands without any marked tendency to speculative price increases.

The worst obstacle to expansion of capacity is psychological—the stubborn resistance of industrialists. They fear "excess capacity" when the war is over. Yet in obstructing plant expansion they increase the chances of an inflation which would create a far greater danger of post-war crisis than enlarged capacity ever could. We can always use the capacity if we plan to do so, but there is no known preventive of the reaction from speculative inflation.

2. The second method is to *stop the growth of the money income* of the nation *when its full productive capacity is reached.* Since the chief source of that growth is now governmental spending, this is largely a fiscal problem. And, in essence, it is a very simple one. When the government spends money that it raises from taxation, it is not increasing the total money income. The same is true when it spends money that it has borrowed from persons or corporations who have saved it. All this money is in the stream of income before the government takes and spends it. It merely circulates by a different route. But when money is spent that is *borrowed from the banks,* the total amount of money is increased. A bank loan represents, not money earned or saved by anybody, but an expansion of debt-credit.

It is impracticable to finance a war or a defense program entirely out of taxation, but we can come a great deal nearer to it than we are now. Present excess-profits taxes will take only a small percentage of war profits. Income taxes in England are many times as high as ours. After boosting taxes as much as is wise, the government can raise a lot of money by borrowing in such a way as to tap savings rather than bank credit. It is already prepared to do so, with bond issues adapted to the requirements of all types of savers, from the largest to the smallest. If eventually, wage earners have money that they cannot spend for restricted supplies of commodities without bidding up prices, they may be induced to buy savings stamps instead.

A word of caution is necessary about the timing of this policy. It would be injurious to try to stop the expansion of income before we have reached the limits of productive capacity. Government borrowing from the banks before that point is reached is not only without danger, but highly desirable. And capacity should be expanded to the limit before the lid is put on income.

3. The third method is to *stop price increases* by direct governmental intervention. Little speculative whirlwinds get started here and there, wherever there is a sudden increase in demand, long before there is any general pressure on capacity. Defense Commissioner Henderson has put his foot down on that sort of thing in several classes of materials. Eventually we may have to have a far more extensive system of price controls, such as now exist in Britain. And, wherever real shortages come into view, the available goods must be allocated in accordance with national need rather than to those having the money to pay the highest price. Here is where priorities and rationing enter the picture. It would be fatal to use them as a substitute for expansion of capacity, but where capacity cannot be expanded, or expansion lags behind the demand, they must be employed thoroughly and ruthlessly.

How about wage increases? It may be laid down as a basic principle that wage increases do not cause inflation. There can be little speculative bidding-up of the price of labor in a wildly excited market, as there sometimes is with metals or shares of stock. Wage increases obtained in orderly collective bargaining may raise costs of production a little, but they cannot be the cause of an uncontrollable inflationary spiral. Wages do not go up fast enough for that. In every inflation on record, prices rise first, fastest and farthest. The principal danger from wage increases in a period of full production arises not from their effect on costs, but from their effect on purchasing power. If there are not enough goods to buy, higher wages cannot be spent except by bidding up prices. But the answer to that is price control, plus an outlet for workers' savings in public investment.

If anyone objects that in this survey of inflation-preventives I have left out a central banking policy for tightening credit, the answer is that I have done so deliberately. It would take too much space here to explain why, except to say this is a method of indirect control (which usually does not work) appropriate to an economy in which business is carrying the ball. When government is doing the buying and price-fixing, banking policy is subsidiary. GEORGE SOULE

This is the third of a series of articles. The first and second, "The Fear of Plenty" and "The Bogey of Excess Capacity," appeared in our issues of March 31 and April 7. – THE EDITORS

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Can We Build Enough Ships?

THE SERIOUS SHIPPING LOSSES suffered by Britain in recent weeks have confronted the United States with the gravest problem of the war. Stated simply, the question is: committed as we are to a British victory, can we afford to let the product of our vast aid program come to rest on the ocean floor? That question, in the light of available information, is neither alarmist nor melodramatic. The British shipping situation is already so critical that we must now decide on steps that will speed delivery, as well as production, of essential arms and supplies. The problem is not merely to find replacements for ships that go down. Nor is it simply a matter of cutting losses to a minimum. It is both of these things plus the necessity of building a merchant fleet that will assure a *constantly greater* flow of materials to Britain and wherever else the President may decide to send them. For that is the only way in which our industrial superiority can bring about final victory.

It is important to realize that even before the war there already existed a worldwide shipping shortage. Since 1929 British tonnage had declined by 2,000,000; that of the United States by 3,000,000. In 1933, to take a bad year, Britain built only 133,000 tons, the United States only 11,000. Before the war almost two-fifths of Britain's normal imports were being delivered in bottoms that are no longer available (German, Italian, etc.). So that even if the Nazis had failed to sink a single ship, the problem of wartime supply, at home and on two additional fronts, would still be a major British handicap.

Britain started the war with only 21,000,000 tons of all categories. The rest of the Empire combined had only 2,500,000 tons. Captures, purchases and transfers (including 1,500,000 tons already acquired in the United States) have provided about 8,000,000 additional tons. It must be kept in mind that the total figure of 31,500,000 tons includes all types of craft of 100 tons or over, and that ships under 1,000 tons cannot properly be classed as "sea-going." Of nearly 5,500,000 tons that have been sunk, about 3,000,000 belonged to Britain, the rest to allies and neutrals. But the losses of allies and neutrals are as serious now as Britain's own, since the total tonnage available to her becomes that much smaller. And though figures on damaged ships are no longer issued, it is known that there are always hundreds laid up for repairs.

It is doubtful if Britain can now muster 20,000,000 tons of ocean-going shipping and, quite apart from the race between losses and replacements, that is simply not enough to keep her effectively supplied. At a minimum, Britain needs 18,000,000 tons, and that is a "subsistence" figure which does not correspond to the necessities of this total war. But the situation becomes more critical when it is seen that even this figure cannot be maintained. The reason is that losses for the coming year, as plotted by conservative naval experts, will be far greater than available and potential replacements.

If Germany is willing to sacrifice her fleet and goes all out with her submarines and bombers in an effort to cut off American aid, some naval authorities believe that Britain may lose 5,000,000 tons in the next year. If this seems excessive, it may be recalled that in one month of the First World War, German U-boats sank 545,000 tons. In any case, it is important to know both the immediate and long-run answers which Britain and America are prepared to make to that threat.

A survey of possible replacement tonnage and the most optimistic estimate of deliveries of ships now under construction show that the Empire and the United States together cannot hope to replace anything like the threatened losses. The truth is that Britain has never encouraged shipbuilding in the colonies and dominions. Many people simply assume that Canada and Australia are rapidly building impressive merchant fleets. But a shipbuilding industry, to be capable of rapid expansion, needs a background of existing, operating facilities and a reservoir of highly skilled labor. Since the First World War, Canadian ship construction, to quote C. D. Howe, Minister of Munitions and Supply, has been "almost dormant." The Canadians have done a good job of getting the old yards and ways into shape, but important results cannot be expected for some time. The forty yards, employing 15,000 men, represent a record program for Canada. So far they have delivered or have under construction seventy corvettes and fifty minesweepers. (The corvettes are proving of great value as convoy vessels and sub-chasers.) But of the eighteen 9,500-ton cargo ships under construction, probably not one will be delivered this year.

Australia can do even less than Canada. The three destroyers and forty-eight patrol ships now building in her seven yards have already absorbed all the available skilled labor. No important merchant tonnage can be expected for two years. At Hong Kong, eleven 9,000-ton ships are being built for Britain, but delivery dates are too far in the future to affect the present crisis.

Britain herself is building steadily, but under enormous handicaps. The yards, under constant bombardment, are confronted with a terrific repair volume, which gets first attention, and the constant naval construction sharply limits the output of cargo vessels. In 1918, free from bombing raids, Britain constructed 1,348,000 tons of merchant shipping. In the year before this war, just over 1,000,000 tons of all types were launched. It has been impossible to get reliable figures

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for current construction, but it is certain that Britain will launch well under 1,000,000 tons of merchant shipping this year.

It is obvious that the American shipbuilding industry, with its considerable present capacity and vast possibilities for expansion, offers the chief hope for Britain. But even here the current rate of deliveries is not great enough to meet the present emergency. The most that the Admiralty expects from the United States this year is 1,300,000 tons, and that figure is probably too high by 20 percent. New construction, therefore, British and American combined, will not exceed 2,000,000 tons, substantially less than the probable sinkings. American production could be very much enhanced if we would return to the "Hog Island" technique of the last war, with prefabricated parts put together on what amounts to an assembly line. Pressure is being put on the shipbuilders to return to this plan.

There remain several steps that might be taken at once. Ships of the Axis and Axis-occupied countries in our ports exceed 500,000 tons. All of these vessels should be utilized immediately. Their acquisition would be the most helpful single move it is now possible to make, since they would help bridge the gap to the time when our own deliveries will become decisive. If the Latin American countries could be persuaded to make a similar move, so much the better.

What may shortly be done, and should have been done much sooner, is to create a joint British-American shipping board to integrate all available shipping into a single, efficient fleet. Such a board, merely by having the power to set schedules, impose priorities and eliminate overlapping wherever the fleet operated, could free a good deal of tonnage for the Atlantic run.

The recent "reinterpretation" of the Rush-Bagot Accord of 1817, which makes possible the building of naval craft on the Great Lakes, is most helpful. But the immediate construction of the St. Lawrence seaway would be much more so. As A. A. Berle recently pointed out, a cruiser laid down now in a Great Lakes yard would be completed at the same time the waterway was ready for use. This would mean that dozens of ways on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts could be made available for merchant construction. Even now, though, a certain amount of Great Lakes shipping could be transferred to coastal runs and so free coastwise freighters for ocean-going service.

In 1942, American delivery of ships will probably give Britain the upper hand in this phase of the war. The striking progress of our shipbuilding industry in the past year makes that almost certain. More than 5,000,000 tons of naval and merchant craft combined are now under construction or on order. This is an increase of more than 150 percent over a year ago. In addition to some fifty yards now working at full capacity, new yards are rapidly being built and workers are being trained to man them. Facilities now under construction will more than double the number of shipbuilding ways. In spite of the fact that we are building a two-ocean navy, the industry has under construction or contract more than 500 merchant vessels of about 4,000,000 tons. By 1942 deliveries will be at the rate of 2,000,000 tons a year, roughly 300 vessels, and, should the war continue, the following year would undoubtedly see a rate of more than 5,000,000. Heartening as this achievement is, it still remains true that the way to cope with sinkings is not merely to replace the ships. Especially now, when the most important factor is speed in making deliveries to Britain, it should be remembered that the convoy probably remains the most effective answer to submarine attacks. Of 16,693 vessels escorted by convoys during the First World War, 99 percent came safely to port. With respect to submarine attacks alone, there is no good reason why convoys should not make so good a record today. Possibly they are doing so, except for those which are bombed or intercepted by raiders.

A breakdown of the war-loss figure of 482 ships sunk up to December 27, 1940, best indicates the nature of the problem. Warships sank 37 ships, mines 105, aircraft 112 and submarines 186. The rest were not accounted for. Effective convoying could almost eliminate the losses due to submarine attack, since the detection devices of the modern destroyer have far outstripped the advances in submarine technique. Convoys would also suffer less loss from raiders, especially if accompanied by cruisers, while naval anti-aircraft fire would even cut down losses inflicted by bombers. Against the latter, Britain will shortly be able to send American long-range patrol bombers with fighter characteristics, especially designed for the purpose.

As a previous article explained, Britain's destroyer strength is not only scattered but is now less than half of her World War destroyer complement. The question that the United States must decide is whether we are willing to see our best defense materials sent to the bottom when we can lend or lease Britain the means to prevent much of this loss. A rumor now well established, and not yet denied in Washington, is that President Roosevelt will soon go beyond the Agreement of Panama, which set up the 300-mile neutrality zone. It is said that he may set the eastern longitude of the American hemisphere at 25 degrees west and that the new zone would include the Azores and Greenland but not Iceland and the Cape Verde Islands. The right to convoy merchant vessels to the new line by the United States navy would be declared, which would mean that our ships would act as escort 2,000 miles out, where British escort vessels would take over. That this may be mere rumor is not so important as the fact that some way of using our naval vessels for convoy purposes should be hit upon, whether through loan of the ships to Britain or by setting up some arbitrary scheme like the one described. Shipbuilding alone, however rapid, is not enough. Aid to Britain that doesn't get there is no aid at all.

MAX GISSEN

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The Genes and the Hope of Mankind

This is the sixth of a series of articles under the general title, "The Men Who Make the Future." They are based on interviews with numerous leading American research experts who were promised that they would not be quoted by name. – THE EDITORS

AMAZING STRIDES have been made in recent years and even months in relation to the most fascinating of all scientific riddles—that which has to do with the origin and development of life itself. These recent achievements would have attracted far more attention than they have were it not that the world has been distracted with war and politics. Nevertheless it is quite possible that some of the work done in the past few years may be remembered for many centuries after the political and military leaders of today are gone and forgotten. In some of the great research laboratories of the United States I have recently had the privilege of seeing the extraordinary achievements in this field that science is now accomplishing.

It is hard to realize how rapidly progress has been made in relation to this subject. It is only since the year 1901 that the Mendelian law has been rediscovered after having lain forgotten for more than thirty-five years in a paper written by the fat Austrian monk. (It was ridiculed, when first published, by some of the leading scientists of the day.) It was more than a decade later before the extensive usefulness of the tiny banana fly in laboratory experiments was fully realized. Only in 1927 did science discover that bombarding the individual with X-rays or neutrons could produce a wide variety of mutations in the next generation, thus speeding up the evolutionary process a hundred or a thousandfold. Not until 1934 did the scientists learn that the giant chromosomes found in the salivary glands of this banana fly (Drosophila) could be studied under the microscope to great advantage. Finally, only within the last year or two have the scientists found out that remarkable things happen to plants when they are treated with the miraculous drug called colchicine, obtained from the roots of the bitter autumn crocus. As a result of all these things, the doors have swung open on a wonderland of new knowledge, although as yet we have only crossed the threshold.

If justice is done, there will some day be monuments all over the world to the banana fly. This tiny, light-colored insect has great advantages in the genetics laboratory. It thrives in captivity, produces one generation in only twelve days, and each female may have several hundred young; thus two years of the banana fly are equal to 2,000 years of mankind. Its unique giant salivary chromosomes seem almost made to order for the research of the scientists.

One of the first things to impress a layman about the new knowledge of the geneticists is the similarity of the life principle in plants and animals. In the great genetics laboratory of the Carnegie Institution at Cold Spring Harbor, Long Island, the other day I saw a chart of the genes and chromosomes of the jimson weed, a favorite plant for colchicine experiments. Only across the hall was a similar chart for the banana fly. While there were of course differences, the similarities were even more apparent. In both cases, the living matter consists of cells. In both cases each of these cells contains a nucleus equipped with a definite number of chromosomes. In both cases these chromosomes are filled with genes. In both cases, each gene or group of them supplies a definite characteristic to the living organism. It is not too much to say that from the standpoint of science plants are only stationary animals, or that animals are perambulating plants.

In order to understand the startling new information which science has unearthed regarding all living things, with its searching implications for our own social conduct, it is necessary to describe briefly the mechanism of birth and growth, as the scientists now understand it. For the sake of simplicity, I shall use the human body as my illustration, although the process is similar throughout all organic matter.

The body consists of microscopically small cells, each containing in its nucleus forty-eight chromosomes that are very much smaller still. Twenty-four of these are contributed by the father and an equal number by the mother. (This rule holds good throughout the world of plants and animals, although the number of chromosomes differs with each species.) The microscopic chromosomes contain the genes and these have the clue to the very riddle of life itself. They are known to control the growth and development of so many characteristics that geneticists believe they probably dictate all growth processes. How many different genes there are in a human being no one knows; it is believed that Drosophila has about three thousand. Man probably possesses at least as many.

Under the microscope the giant salivary chromosomes of Drosophila (100 to 170 times larger than those in other tissues) look somewhat like tiny snakes with alternate transverse markings of light and dark. You must not think, however, that each dark area is one gene or even that the genes are concentrated in them. All that the scientists are willing to say is that certain genes are associated with certain dark areas and that the bands in some sense mark the limits within which certain genes are known to lie. There are of course many genes in each part of each chromosome.

There is one important exception to the rule that

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there are forty-eight chromosomes in every human cell. The male sperm and the female ovum which meet to start a new life have only twenty-four chromosomes each. They meet and join at the moment of fertilization and the chromosomes which appear in the cells of the offspring come from both parents. This meeting of the chromosomes and genes is not a matter of mere blind chance. Genes for the same characteristic of the individual (color of hair or eyes, pigmentation, etc.) are located always in the same chromosomes. (Any one character, such as eye color, is not, however, controlled only by genes from a single chromosome.) The genes from both father and mother jointly dictate the characteristics of the child.

As science discovered more than a hundred years ago, there are dominant and recessive characters. When they meet, we now know, the dominant will win out, as the word itself suggests. In Mendel's famous experiment, he crossed a true-breeding form of red peas with white ones. Red is dominant; white is recessive. In the next generation all the plants had red flowers, but they were carrying the white genes none the less. The self-fertilized grandchildren of these peas were 25-percent pure red and 25-percent pure white. The other 50 percent were red in color, but they, too, carried white genes, so that their descendants would not breed true to the dominant red.

Sometimes characteristics are controlled according to whether the organism possesses one gene of a certain type, or a pair of them. For example, there are two genes which, when they appear in pairs, cause a man to sing bass and a woman to sing soprano. Two other genes, in pairs, produce tenors and altos. One gene from each pair, together, cause baritones and mezzo-sopranos. As Dr. Herluf Strandskov has pointed out, the children of a basso and a soprano can only sing bass or soprano; a tenor and an alto can have only children of those voices. A baritone and a mezzo-soprano are the only mating that can hope to produce a quartet!

How does a child grow from an almost invisible, microscopic fertilized egg into a two-hundred-pound football player? He grows, and so does everything else in nature, by cell division. Did you ever put a bubble pipe in soapsuds and blow until a mass of tiny bubbles rose above the surface of the water and almost overflowed the basin? The analogy is inaccurate, but the mental picture you will get is similar to what happens in the process of cell division. Each of the forty-eight chromosomes in a cell divides by splitting lengthwise into two parts, which separate, half of them going to the right, so to speak, and the other half to the left. Then the nucleus begins to narrow in the middle, into a dumbbell shape, with forty-eight chromosomes in each end. The bar in the middle grows shut; the two ends break off, and we have two cells each containing all the chromosomes of the original one. This process is repeated; the two cells become four, the four become eight, and so on, until their number rises into billions.

The almost unbelievable work that has recently been done is *to identify the genes which create certain characteristics of the living creature*. With enormous patience and countless hours of weary industry, the scientists have tracked down the characteristics associated with individual genes. (This had been worked out in theory some years before it was verified under the microscope through experiments in artificial mutation.) In the case of the jimson weed, for example, about five hundred new genes have been discovered, of which more than seventy have been located in particular chromosomes. The scientist can put his finger on the chromosome chart of the jimson weed and can say: "At this point are found the gene or genes that cause the plant to have a rough skin, or to carry tufts, or to be an albino." In the banana fly, similarly, the scientists know where in the chromosome lie the genes associated with certain definite characters such as the color of the eye, the size of the wings, bands on the abdomen, and so on. More than five hundred genes in Drosophila have been definitely located.

A few years ago it was discovered that carefully controlled bombardment with X-rays, neutrons or other radiation would affect the genes. Sometimes they are altered or destroyed, sometimes the arrangement of the sections of the chromosomes is changed. In a state of nature, once in many times the genes are spontaneously changed by extreme heat or cold, by old age, or for other reasons. When the organism is subjected to X-rays, the process of change is enormously speeded up. Large numbers of mutations can be detected in the short space of two generations, and the scientists are perhaps beginning to see the mechanism of evolution in operation before their very eyes.

The almost incredible fact is that the experts now know in advance in a general way what will happen when Drosophila is subjected to a moderately severe dose of X-ray. Perhaps half the flies will be killed. Among the survivors some will have descendants, and among these descendants certain types of mutation will appear in definite percentages which the scientists *can now predict in advance*. They can tell you before the baby Drosophilae are born (when they are considered in sufficient quantities) about how many will have dwarfed wings, or white eyes, resulting from lack of pigmentation, or other abnormalities. If mankind has ever come any nearer than this to usurping the privileges of the Deity, I do not know where.

These changes in characteristics which the scientists create in the laboratory will breed true for all time in the future unless affected by additional mutation later on. Ten thousand years from now, if these Drosophilae were to continue having descendants that long, their remote offspring would still have white eyes or dwarf wings, because the genes creating the normal characteristics, colored eyes or large wings, are lacking or altered. To illustrate this with a more familiar labo-

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ratory animal: you could cut off the tails of 1,000 generations of mice and the one-thousand-and-first would have tails as long as those of the original ancestors. But destroy the chief long-tail-producing genes in a single pair of mice, and their descendants, if inbred and selected for taillessness until they are pure for this characteristic, will be tailless forever more.

The action of the genes must certainly be one of the most interesting mechanisms in the realm of nature. It is hard to believe, yet it is increasingly being proved, that almost every hereditary characteristic of the individual is to be found packed away in these microscopic particles. The genes, acting together, seem literally to *plan* the growing organism. Science does not yet know just how this is done, or the relation among the genes, the mysterious and miraculous glands of internal secretion and the tissues. It is assumed that the genes control the shape that growth takes from the beginning of the new life. There are embryonic tissues, called by the geneticists "organizers," which evoke specific growth-reactions in other embryonic tissues. In the human being each of the glands of internal secretion—the pituitary, the thyroids, parathyroids, pancreas, adrenals and gonads—secretes one or more hormones which, poured into the blood stream, keep the body functioning. Most of them, indeed, are vitally necessary for the maintenance of life itself.

It staggers the imagination to think of the genes at work through the months and years creating every organ of the complex electro-chemical-physical machine for living that is the body. Either directly, or indirectly through the endocrine glands, they bring each of the organs to full usefulness at the proper time and in co-ordination with each other. Then think of the hundreds of thousands of species of animals and plants, in each of which the genes follow the proper and unique pattern of the species, and you begin to have some idea of the wonders of this universe.

When you lift your arm or bend your finger the process is an electro-chemical one. The nerve impulse from the brain sets up at the proper places in the muscles an electrically induced chemical alteration. It is possible that the genes do their work in the same way; we do not know.

Nothing is more mysterious in this whole complex story than that the genes, and the tissues and glands which they help to build up, seem to work on an elaborate and intricate time schedule. In human beings, for example, there are characteristics that do not develop until many years have passed. There appear to be "bad" genes, from the individual's point of view, which lurk unsuspected for half a century and then cause a man to become bald in just the way his father did. Others seemingly wait for decades to produce hereditary blindness or insanity. A marvelous mechanism is that operated by the gonads which brings about the characteristics of adolescence at thirteen or fourteen, produces hair on the face of the male (in certain races) at eighteen or nineteen, and either creates the changes of the menopause in the forties and fifties or, by ceasing to function, permits them. There are even presumably old-age genes which determine, before you are born, how long you will live—if you don't terminate your life prematurely with whiskey, a bullet or a speeding automobile. For longevity, as everyone knows, "runs in families," and whatever runs in families, if actually inherited, is controlled by the genes. That is to say, the tissues and organs of the individual have a gene-determined life cycle that will be carried out if other factors do not intervene.

The miracle of the "time-clock genes" is clearly shown in the case of identical twins—twins which arise from a single fertilized egg which for some reason divided early in embryonic life to produce two human beings with, so far as science knows, the same genes and chromosomes. Identical twins develop the same physical characteristics, throughout life, at almost exactly the same time. This principle holds even if three, four or five children have developed from a single egg. This is the case with the Dionne quintuplets, which have the same genes.

Let me emphasize again that it is wrong to think of a single gene as performing a specified function unaided. It is now believed that every gene influences every other, just as all the genes occur in every chromosome and there are forty-eight chromosomes in every cell of the body except the sperm and ovum from which the new life will be created. There are eye genes in your toe, and toe genes in your eye. Science now knows that there are certain groups of genes which are inherited together. Often such genes appear to have no logical relation to one another, at least in the present state of our understanding. In some families of human beings, for example, a given color of hair is associated with the lack of one or more of the incisor teeth. By studying family strains it is possible to predict that a child born to certain parents, and having hair of a given color, will possess only six or seven incisors instead of eight.

This innocent-sounding fact is likely to prove of the very highest practical value to the future of the human race. Many diseases are not predominantly hereditary, but others are, and often you can inherit a predisposition. Among the hereditary ones are some that are particularly terrible in their effects, which nevertheless do not manifest themselves until middle life, after the victim has unwittingly married and had children to whom he can pass on his taint. An example of such a disease is Huntington's chorea, which does not appear until the individual is thirty-five or forty years of age. Previously he may have been a fine physical and mental specimen. When Huntington's chorea strikes, he goes to pieces mentally and physically; his muscles fail; he sinks into hopeless insanity which usually terminates, after a few years, in death.

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Medical science knows no way to cure this terrible malady; but the knowledge that is coming out of the laboratory gives us the hope of a means by which we could stamp it out in only a few generations. If linked genes could be discovered that are inherited together and transmitted with the disease, latent Huntington's chorea could be identified far in advance through other seemingly harmless and unrelated characteristics. No civilized person would marry and have children if he knew that such a fate overhung him and them. The time may not be far distant when, thanks to the advance of science, society can say to such an individual long before he reaches the age for fatherhood that it is forbidden to him. Other dread diseases, believed to be hereditary, for which there is now similar hope are muscular atrophy, which brings death at about the age of twenty, and hereditary blindness, which may also begin in the late teens.

Opinion is divided among the experts as to whether it is possible to inherit a predisposition toward diabetes or whether its seeming to "run in families" is due to quite different causes. Whatever the scientific explanation, it is desirable that one who may develop diabetes should be forewarned and should take the necessary steps to safeguard himself by following a hygienic routine of living. Science is now prepared, by the study of family histories, to give warnings of this sort.

These new secrets of the laboratory have resulted in greatly altering our concepts of many aspects of our individual and communal life. Here are a few:

1. Geneticists are no longer interested in the old debate as to whether environment is more important than heredity. From their point of view, both are of tremendous significance. What the organism inherits is not so much characteristics as the tendency to produce these characteristics *provided the environment is favorable*—a profound new discovery which, if it could be grasped by political leaders in all its implications, might well make over our society. For example, there is a species of rabbit whose hair is mostly white; but if exposed long enough to low temperature, black hair grows out. Pink-flowered hydrangeas can be changed to blue by adding iron salts to the soil. Tall corn planted too close together will grow only a quarter of its normal size. Yet the offspring of these rabbits, hydrangeas and corn, in a normal environment, will again have white fur, pink flowers and tall stalks. When the hereditary influences are strong, those of environment are correspondingly weak, and vice versa.

These changes, however, could not have taken place unless the organisms carried the special genes that make them possible. Not all rabbits have fur that changes color; there are "Tom Thumb" breeds of corn that never grow tall no matter how widely the hills are spaced; some flowers remain the same color when fed iron salts. In other words, environment can change you, but only on a basis of what you originally possess —or lack. It is like the developing chemical in the photographer's dark room; it creates nothing, but it can bring out what is on the plate. The tragedy of life is that we so often discard the plate without ever finding the perhaps rich and beautiful picture concealed on it.

2. For practical purposes, at least, we may assume that almost nothing in our biological heritage is transmitted from one generation to the next except what is passed on in the genes. This does away at one stroke with a multitude of conceptions of the popular mind. It is nonsense to suppose, for example, that because a mother before the birth of her child receives a fright or sees a snake, the child will be "marked," any more than he will be musical or artistic if she goes to concerts and galleries.

3. There is a popular theory that whole families can be subjected to continuous decay and degeneration. This might be true under very special circumstances, if, for instance, all the good men in a community had been killed off in war, or in the case of isolated groups where inbreeding would serve to reinforce undesirable strains instead of desirable ones. The chances are, however, that when a family seems to go rapidly downhill from generation to generation, it is only partly because of bad heredity. The rest of the story is environment—poverty, ignorance and imitation of their elders driving down one crop of children after another.

Science nowadays looks with deep suspicion on conclusions drawn from the famous "degenerate families" such as the Jukes and the Kallikaks, with which sociologists regaled us a generation ago. No doubt there were some "morbid" genes among the members of these families; but the sociologists made a bad mistake in attributing the whole evil record to the genes alone and ignoring environmental factors. What chance would even a normal child have had, brought up in a household composed largely of drunkards, thieves and prostitutes? His family record would be enough to turn the community against him from the start. The geneticists of today try to balance the evils transmitted by the genes against those caused by imperfect surroundings.

4. Alcoholism, as such, probably cannot be transmitted from parent to child, though an unstable neural system, predisposing to dipsomania, may be. When the son of a drunkard takes to drink, it is possible that his genes are involved; but it is also possible and even probable, that it is by imitation or in response to a bad environment in which the father's alcoholism played a part. Roughly the same is true of other human weaknesses—drug addiction, sexual promiscuity, improvidence, love of gambling, habitual lying.

5. The common belief that the mother's blood circulates through the body of the child before birth is now known to be false. The two blood streams are separated by the placenta, though which nourishment passes by osmosis, which is roughly the way that blotting paper picks up moisture. Mr. Justice Holmes in a famous decision once held that an unborn child is "a part of the

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mother's bowels"; but science has overruled the great Justice. The number of abnormal conditions the mother can transmit to the unborn child is much smaller than is commonly supposed. She can infect her baby with syphilis, but this is not a hereditary form, and responds to treatment. She cannot transmit gonorrhea, although she can infect the child during birth itself. Until a few years ago, thousands of children all over the world became blind at birth because of venereal infection transmitted in this way. There are a few drugs which manage to find their way through the placenta, and it is believed, for example, without much reliable evidence, that an unborn child may become a cocaine addict. Certainly the child's genes can be injured before birth by lead poisoning. But such pathological conditions, at least as between mother and child, are not hereditary and can be treated just as post-natal infections are.

As scientific knowledge improves, we learn more and more about inherited susceptibility, or predisposition, toward certain diseases, as well as resistances or even immunities. We learn that some types of illness formerly supposed to be hereditary are only partially or not at all in this category, while in other cases inherited characteristics are found to predispose an individual toward a given disease. Among those in which inheritance is a definite factor are rheumatic fevers in childhood, a few rare types of cancer, color blindness, a number of disorders of the eye, baldness and albinism. Certain sorts of feeble-mindedness are hereditary. The geneticists are increasingly reluctant to draw a hard and fast line between environmental and hereditary factors; yet in regard to ten of the twelve most serious diseases, environment on the whole seems more important than heredity.

These recent scientific revelations have enormously altered our conception of eugenics. We understand now for the first time how mutations occur, through destruction or alteration of the genes. From the individual's point of view, there are good and bad genes, but the good ones enormously outnumber the bad. Since nearly all changes in the genes are destructive, and consist in taking something away, under the law of averages most mutations are undesirable. They produce an organism limited in some respects, in comparison with its parent, and therefore probably somewhat less fitted to cope with its environment.

In a state of nature, this does not matter greatly, for it is offset by natural selection—the survival of the fittest. Mutations that are disadvantageous tend to die out; good ones help the organism to survive and to transmit its desirable "symphony of genes" to the next generation. But unfortunately, civilization as it has existed for the past few centuries tends to reverse this process. We are moving in the direction of keeping everyone alive, the unfit as well as the fit, and permitting nearly all of them to transmit their genes to their children. Many of the leading geneticists of the world believe that this process, continued long enough, would so reinforce the morbid genes as to bring about the degeneration of the race.

To say this is not, however, to accept the theories of those who are demanding wholesale compulsory sterilization of the unfit. The geneticists realize better than the amateur enthusiasts what an enormously difficult and complicated subject this is. They advocate sterilization in certain definite cases of proved hereditary feeble-mindedness and insanity, partly to put an end to bad genes and partly because people of low or unstable intelligence bring up their children badly. In other cases of undesirable heredity, the experts recommend voluntary abstention from parenthood.

Amazing things have been done in only a few generations to perfect plants and animals, and impatient persons often ask why the same should not be possible for mankind. It is a legitimate question and the assumed answer holds an exciting promise for the future. There is little doubt that if genetic principles could be applied to humanity, the average of our population could be brought up to the level of our best examples within a few generations. If you want a slogan, here it is: "Every man a genius by the year 2141."

The difficulty is that somebody would have to decide what are the desirable traits, after we had agreed that hereditary feeble-mindedness and insanity are undoubted handicaps. His judgments would be subjective, and that is where the trouble comes in. Who is to accept the fearful responsibility of saying what are good traits for a future society, and what are bad ones? For that matter, who is to say what the future society will be like? Will you assume a continuance of our present social organization, which seems to require large numbers of not-too-bright toilers and soldiers? Or will you envisage an ideal state of universal peace and all the heavy work done by machines?

The overwhelming obstacle is that most human beings today live in environments so unsatisfactory that we cannot tell what their genetic possibilities are. We know by scientific research that there are thousands of geniuses in this country alone who remain swamped by poverty and ignorance and never get a chance to demonstrate their abilities. Before we can live up to the promise of our genetic future, we must remove the shackles which prevent full development of our present capabilities. Otherwise, the effort at improvement is like trying to carve a statue in the dark.

The geneticists, on a basis of solid science, hold forth a glorious picture of the future of mankind. They tell us that by improving our environment and our heredity simultaneously we can in a few generations abolish nearly all human afflictions. It is sober truth to say that it lies within our power to create a race of super beings, living in Utopia, and to do so in perhaps the length of time that has elapsed since George Washington was born. No more exciting prospect was ever offered mankind.

BRUCE BLIVEN

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Washington Notes

The State Department Gets Tough

UNITED STATES DIPLOMACY got as undiplomatic as possible about the seizure of Axis ships in American ports and the subsequent demand for expulsion of Admiral Alberto Lais, Italian naval attaché, from the country. Not since Captain Karl Boy-Ed and Franz von Papen were handed their passports and their hats in 1915, had a foreign diplomat been dismissed so unceremoniously. Italian Ambassador Don Ascanio P. Colonna was informed in a note scarcely longer than his name that Admiral Lais has become *persona non grata* to the United States government and please to get him to hell out of here. The note was delivered, moreover, while German and Italian protests against the ship seizures were still being ignored. Judged by any standard of protocol, the whole affair was not so much slap of glove on cheek as thud of boot on pants for Signor Mussolini and Herr Hitler.

Then, to be sure that persons unschooled in the practices of diplomacy would not miss it, the State Department informed the press that Admiral Lais was held responsible for sabotage of Italian ships tied up in American ports and that the incident followed very closely President Wilson's procedure in the Boy-Ed and von Papen case.

Why President Roosevelt wanted the Axis ships seized before they could be reduced to junk by their crews is obvious. They are valuable property which may later help solve the problem of keeping the Atlantic bridged. But why the World War parallel was so carefully pointed up and the whole thing carried off with such bravado is less apparent. It is no longer necessary to explain to the Italian and German governments that they are not in the good graces of the United States government. Apparently, the President wanted to test the temper of the American people with an unmistakable suggestion that this nation's policy involves more than a remote risk of war. If that was his purpose, he got his answer. Judging from public statements of protest, or rather, lack of them, the man in the street felt that the Germans and Italians had it coming and did they want to make anything out of it?

Even before this show of unconcern, it had become fairly apparent that the nation was ready for whatever risk the President's policy of all-out help for the democracies entailed. The pluck of the British and the Greeks appealed to a sporting instinct deeply ingrained in Americans that no argument, however persuasive, could have touched. Then the dramatic Yugoslav coup, the consequent satisfactory defeat of German diplomacy in the Balkans and, finally, the spectacular British naval victory in the Ionian Sea all contributed to the feeling that we Americans had our money on a promising horse, though a long shot, after all. Even the alarming intensity of public resentment against defense-industry strikers, no matter how just their demands, was in a way a measure of the country's approval of the Roosevelt foreign policy. Indeed, this was one manifestation of unity that suggested that there might soon be something in the isolationists' warnings against war hysteria.

In any event, it was obvious after the ship seizures that the President would have a fairly free hand to practise his diplomacy. The isolationist opposition, given a chance to do its worst with this incident, did practically nothing. Senator Burton K. Wheeler got up a small committee of Senators and Representatives to stump the country "for peace," but its members had shot their bolt in the lease-lend debate and didn't look very imposing. John L. Lewis did some grumbling about the imminence of war in his coal-negotiation show, but commanded little attention. In fact, some of his lieutenants predicted on the basis of his private conversation that Lewis would gradually ease himself onto the President's foreign-policy bandwagon to facilitate his projected comeback as boss of the CIO.

Just what the President will do with his new latitude for maneuver remains to be seen. For the time being, he will probably pursue more boldly the policy of promising material aid which helped keep Greece fighting in Albania and then helped snatch Yugoslavia from the jaws of the Axis. Turkey would seem to be the President's most promising next prospect. He also may try to keep alive what spirit of Axis resistance remains in Vichy and in Spain. Promises will not do much good, of course, unless they are followed by deliveries, and deliveries on a large scale to Britain's Balkan allies will raise difficult problems. The problem will be helped if President Roosevelt goes through with his plan of raising the ban against sending American ships into the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea.

While it is being solved, the President can make the most of his own popularity and of a wholesome respect for American productive capacity in Mediterranean and northern European countries. Colonel William Donovan and other observers agree that these two easily transportable assets to the cause of democracy can be a tremendously important factor. In the short time since the lease-lend bill was passed they have taken some of the starch out of the Nazis.

Washington T. R. B.

Watch on the Rhine

Watch on the Rhine, by Lillian Hellman. Martin Beck Theatre, April 1, 1941.

MISS HELLMAN'S NEW PLAY tells the story of an anti-Nazi agent who has been in and out of Germany since 1933, fighting what he sees as the cause of the Fatherland, and after bringing his wife and children to her home in America, is about to return to the fight. His immediate purpose there is to get a friend out of the hands of the Gestapo, by means of bribes or whatever can be done. In the Farrelly house are also staying a Rumanian count and his American wife, and the struggle of the two men proceeds to make the plot of the play.

The Farrellys' house stands twenty miles from Washington, in a gracious and abundant country; the life they lead there is easy and luxurious, secure and comfortable in the American style—all things in order stored. The mistress of the house is an ambassador's daughter, so that we may assume that the people there know the world. They do know it in a way, the American way, though they are by no means prepared for what comes to them from Europe, which amounts to saying they know the

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world very little. For all their contacts with the world abroad and with Washington, the capital of the United States, and for all the number of words they must have heard and read on international subjects, they still have the American innocence of what Europe is like, of what European living is and Europeans are, with all that complexity, design, caution, ancient despair, those old or upward-pressing ideologies, hot-colored or drab, their capacity for heroism or for a long, hidden cunning and craft, et cetera, et cetera, as the case may be.

This is very astute of the dramatist to give her Americans the advantages, position and kind of public access, shall we say, that they enjoy; otherwise, if we chose to, we might put down their reactions to some provincial simplicity or busy and comfortable heedlessness or what the present audience might think the twilight of the hinterland. But with these people in the Farrelly house that could not be done. With equal astuteness the author contrives to keep these Americans of hers quite safe from being bracketed with the intelligentsia—to use a very loose and tired, and tedious, word.

In this situation, this mutual confrontation of Europe and America, lies the most interesting, and, to the stage especially, uncommon matter in the play; and I could wish that more emphasis had been put on it. The subject comes once into the conversation between Mueller, the German, with all the noble complexity and tangle of his life, and the Rumanian, with his shady courses, threats of blackmail and so on. And from time to time there are remarks or implications that bear on the subject. But a good deal more could be done with it, to the play's gain in significance and interest and undoubtedly in the effect that would remain in our minds afterward and continue to grow.

The play as it stands is, of course, essentially a melodrama. That is nothing against it so long as, taking it as theatre, the movement goes forward; and so long as, taking it as serious drama, the texture and substance keep up with the movement. It is of the same family as Miss Hellman's "The Little Foxes" or "The Children's Hour," though compared to "The Children's Hour," for example, it is far less steady and sure and expert. The sense of artificial contrivance, also, is more conspicuous. Some of the first act appears to lose time or wander too amiably—for one instance, perhaps, with the scene of the children in which so many lines are given to Bodo, the comical, pedantic little boy. And in the last act the interval seems unduly prolonged from the point at which Mueller kills the count and drags his body out, to the final curtain. Mueller's farewell to his three children is full of matter that is high-minded, innately implicit to the moment, and apt to the play's living meaning. It is, too, certainly within the high tradition—Sophocles, for example, where at the very end of the play almost, Oedipus is given thirty-four full lines of this same farewell. This passage in Miss Hellman's play should not be thrown away—our drama greatly needs such substance as is here intended—but it could be much improved.

"Watch on the Rhine," nevertheless, binds the attention of the audience to the stage, and very often binds it tight. A great deal of that is due to the expert stage craft of the melodrama itself. But a great deal, also, comes from the author's remarkable gift for character, the way in which she can lay out a group of characters that are not crudely differentiated one from another or hammered at in the writing or thrown at each other's heads for the sake of contrasts and variety. They are observed with much pains as to the exact kind of detail that will convince us of their actual existence and difference, relationships and mutual reactions to each other, and that will brighten our eyes and ears to note them pointedly and with pleasure.

This is carried further by the excellent casting that has been given the play. The whole company is far above the usual casting, Miss Lucile Watson especially, who plays with what seems to me absolutely unbroken sureness and brilliance, and in the last act, where a different depth of feeling and tone, but still within the same character, is called for, is better than ever. Mr. Paul Lukas as Mueller gives a fine, tortured performance, remarkably convincing. Only in the scene where he kills the Rumanian does he need to reshape the moment; it needs a second more of time perhaps, or certainly a larger movement, the action here should begin sooner in a fuller sense. (So fine an actor will know what is meant by that.)

Miss Mady Christians, as daughter of the house and Mueller's wife, is excellent, above all in the intense, controlled and subtle responses of this woman to the people around her, a very necessary element in this particular case. Mr. John Lodge seems to me admirably chosen for this role of the son of the Farrelly house; he not only plays intelligently, but he has an elusive quality of breeding and easy confidence without which the contrast the character makes with the two foreigners and with his worn sister, and even, though differently, with his mother, would be lost. Mr. George Coulouris as the count, and Miss Eda Heinemann as the family retainer, governess and what not, both play with great competence. The other roles, the three children included, all fare well. To this casting and playing, Mr. Herman Shumlin adds equally good directing.

As an indictment of Nazism, "Watch on the Rhine" will seem more or less pointed and forceful according to the spectator. You may say quite plausibly that the play would get pretty much the same results if the hero's enemy were almost any sort of men and things that he was at odds with, that he had fought bravely against and been persecuted by, and that make his return to save a friend highly dangerous, and his whole resolution heroic and appealing. In sum it is the story and characters that really carry us along with the play, however much or little the anti-Nazi connotations may stick in our minds. Any way you take it, "Watch on the Rhine" is infinitely better than the propaganda plays we are used to in the theatre.

STARK YOUNG

Song

O Love looked through the shatter-net,
Love cannot forget.

O lovers do not quarrel. Whilst we war,
lovers, kiss,
Kiss on. Make not partings in the grass
To stand separate to the scythe
That sweeps so near.
Kind hearts, run fast with love,
Not fear.

JOAN ADENEY

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Review of Revuers

SO FEW THINGS come along which are both new and nearly perfect, that we ought to celebrate and throw hats. There is a group of talent in New York which has been working out its own act for some two years, working hard and having fun and delighting everybody. It calls itself The Revuers and consists of five people. Its only properties are a piano, a straw hat, a couple of baby spots and a few feathers. It has no arranger or director or manager, no staff of the kind of writers who never forget a joke or forgive it. Its air of impromptu fools the nearly wise into forming silently the word amateur; but its routines are so perfectly worked out for pace and putting over, the cuing of the ensemble so exact and right and imperceptible, that nobody is hindered by jagged edges from forming any word he wants.

They are five people who would be known in show business as kids (average age, as given and remember there are two girls in the act, twenty-two). Betty Comden and John Frank. Adolf Green, Alvin Hammer, Judy Tuvim. They do what is known in show business as an act, with songs. But the act they do is not generally known in show business, a kidding act mostly, made up from close and shrewd observation of the things in everybody's life, but changed into a thing which goes by itself through clever devising and mutual punch. It started a couple of years ago simply as an off chance. Betty Comden and John Frank had known each other at NYU. They knew Judy Tuvim, who knew Adolf Green, who knew Alvin Hammer. They were all New Yorkers. They used to kid around a little, but the thing that set them off was Judy's report that Max Gordon was looking for an act to put in his cellar in the Village. He didn't even have a liquor license at the time, and his place was usually a hangout for such forensic talents as Joe Gould and Maxwell Bodenheim. Max would give them a chance at least, how about running up a few numbers? So they did, the five of them meeting either at Betty's or at Judy's, where there was a piano. They had actually had no professional training, though Alvin was professionally at liberty around Broadway, and John Frank had been doing some folk singing with a peasant song-and-guitar group. And Judy had been hanging around the Mercury Theatre, where she was a script reader without pay.

Adolf Green had probably had the most active career, and that quite far from the theatre. He had worked as a Wall Street runner in a brokerage house, and had been a linoleum estimator—that is, he went around to houses with a ruler and a smile and measured the floor, twelve by fourteen is 168 square feet, madam. But he grew out of these into being at liberty too. They were all set to go.

At that time they had not worked out any main theme to string acts on. They went to the movies for three of their skits; they did a take-off on a best-seller of the time, calling it "Young Man with a Zazoo," and they had a turn in which the various representatives of leading dailies reviewed the scalp off a play in the style and tone of their respective sheets. There was also one about magazines, in which a housewife was pestered into a collapse by salesmen in the general format of the periodicals they were hawking. One of the best ones is still retained in the show, "The Psychoanalysis Blues," in which each of the three boys is a case of horror from the screen around us.

Then they had one they haven't done much lately, though it is one of their shrewdest comments. It is the Hardy family at home on the set, with the child star catching flies, running up to the camera, doing cartwheels across someone else's lines and generally driving a veteran actor to thoughts of murder and a scene of his own. Then there was the little sound-effects number, also from pictures—still different enough to be good for a laugh, and probably a comment on movie scoring, too. It's just a man eating breakfast and reading the paper, while someone supplies his dumbshow with a varied but crashing accompaniment of bizarre but typically overrecorded noise effects from the wings.

The Revuers finally left Gordon's Vanguard for five weeks at the Rainbow Room, where they went over all right but only had two twelve-minute shots a night, and missed their old audience, which had got so fiercely proprietary about the whole thing that they knew all the lines and threatened to finish any scene the kids started, if given a chance. After the Rainbow Room there was the Fair, and then they did some television shows which I can hardly report on, as television where I saw it was not even in its first infancy and kept hopping around or blotting out.

The job that worked them the hardest was a thirty-week stretch on radio—and it was the job most productive for us, because they had to work up a completely new half-hour of material every week, and out of that came some of their best ideas. That was where the two main acts of their present show originated, the one about the invention of the shoehorn by Ambrose Mippy and the Variety Says number which serves both as opener and as a thread of theme to tie the rest up with. For example, the singing-sister sketch is introduced: "Variety says, 'Trio Trillers Killer Dillers,' which means," etc. Variety was proud to print the number in full, starting the story on page one ("With lengthy phrases it has no patience: Variety uses abbreviations").

And somewhere along there in the show they have the love potion, as drunk by Tristan and Isolde, by characters taken respectively and devastatingly from Maxwell Anderson (in a delicious version of his own sour Elizabethan double talk—"Ah but if in this whirling wildness we do quaff, as ichor at the dooming well not known, but if, if"—and they shrug, blacking out in a vaudeville Abie); and Clifford Odets ("We could make night music together, baby, I'll tear down the stars for ya, me, Moe Rappaport") and Noel Coward. In the Coward one, two of them come front and center:

SHE. One Scotch. Veddy large.

HE. One rye, veddy small.

SHE. My name is Cynthia, Cynthia Starling. *I adore you.*

HE. My name is Simon, Simon Gayforth. I love you, hm, eh, desperately.

SHE. Extrodnry the effect cheap likkah has on one. (*They drink.*)

BOTH. Someday I'll find you somewhere. (*Blackout.*)

It is in the manner more than in the matter, and one without the other is hardly reproducible, but I should say they

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have better satire on the Broadway theatre than has been rounded up on the same stage, and all without properties.

But seeing is the best believing, and if you aren't within reach of Max Gordon's cellar drop, don't worry: they can't keep those kids out of pictures. Probably the most valuable assurance of their eventual spread over the country is not just that they are good, and that night after night those who have found them come back, so that after your ear gets sharpened a little you can pick out the new tables from the regulars by the fact that a new table doesn't break the laugh until the line sinks in, whereas the regulars are laughing right on the nose of the joke. It is not like Clayton, Jackson and Durante because when the show is set there is no horsing around with ad-libs. But it is the most consistently funny show I have ever seen put on, in that you may have favorites among the dozen or so numbers in the active repertory but will find no merely passing numbers, none in bad taste, none they just walk through to fill in between high points, none that is dull. It's all right if you can't believe it; I can't either; and if you can't believe that anything is worth seeing more than two or three times, remember that this thing is put together with such a tight weave, every line is so studied to make it count by itself, that you get half the points the first time; half the remainder the second, and so on, with never a surfeit.

But the assurance I spoke of resides in the nature of their relationship. They started as five and they stay at five, and they resist the pressure that inevitably works to break a thing up by maintaining their own discipline and brushing off all attempts to trace authorship of line or situation. They meet two or three afternoons a week; they rehearse new acts and pool ideas communally; and the only credit line they will allow is We Equally, for words *and* music.

They have a booking agency now. They've worked the Music Hall once (three weeks) and probably will again, as everybody had fun when they were there despite the enormous size of that auditorium. They worked summer theatres and probably will again. They will take individual jobs when the group doesn't need them. But professionally they are the five Revuers, never dependent on gag men or the treachery of other people's scripts. And they are professional now in the best sense. I've never seen them blow a line or muffle a punch; their timing could be studied as well for the right pace and projection for a solo act as for the unison work, each one in right on the nail and out to make room for the next, in chorus speaking clearly and as one man. They are up against one thing, and always have been: the curse of the "intimate" show. Everybody comes and laughs but somehow likes to cuddle his own IQ about it. Wonderful, you hear a dope saying from time to time and then shaking his head. But the dopes won't get it. Or, they'd be lost on a big stage. Or, they'd have to tone that stuff down for the radio, the movies. And so on.

Well, the record shows otherwise, but even if there were no record, there is a certain general truth which keeps getting proved to us without our believing it, and this is that when a show is good, trained right down to a fine point and alive with its own gusto and originality, it will find an audience, and an audience far larger and more universal than any handful of big-city, column-reading weisenheims. There are so many things that everybody knows about and feels vaguely about, that no group of boys and girls with a sense of perception and of the absurd, with an over-all talent for song and dance and mimicry, will have to worry about tiring its audience so long as it keeps together and is not tired itself. The Revuers have weathered their first years and first success, and are today just like starting. You'll be seeing them.

OTIS FERGUSON

The Bandwagon

Signor Gayda declared that the British had captured Cheren solely because of "the superiority of brute force." – *From an item in The New York Times.*

Mr. Gibney disallowed many of Mr. Schenck's deductions which the movie executive said were expenses incurred as part of his business. Mr. Schenck, for example, deducted half the expenses of maintaining his yacht. Mr. Gibney disallowed the deduction—even to the item of $2.75 for a toenail cutter. This toenail cutter was maintained aboard the yacht so guests would not be forever ripping up the sheets in their berths. – *From The New York World-Telegram.*

Girl, Found on Curb, Stripped of Clothes, Reports Ring Theft. – *Headline in The Washington Star.*

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer already is dickering for the film rights to the Paul Green-Richard Wright "Native Son," Orson Welles success at the St. James. If the film company buys the property, however, it will rewrite it for an entirely white movie cast. – *News item in The New York Daily News.*

But Do the Germans Know It?

Every tactic of Britain and France that has seemed militarily false—their failure to occupy Norway, or Belgium, or Holland, or even Ireland in advance of Hitler—has been psychologically masterful. – *Dorothy Thompson's "On the Record" in The New York Herald Tribune.*

A Meeting of Minds

It was understood by these [unofficial German political] circles that the German government, which last night demanded an explanation of Yugoslavia, left no doubt that the new government must come through with an equivocal statement of its position on the pact. – *AP dispatch from Berlin printed in The Washington Post.*

Out of the Mouths of Babes

No mechanical invention that we can picture today is as yet capable of mobilizing a newborn infant for war, but the rationed milk bottle does it. Babes in arms are in a very real sense a part of the nation in arms. The milk which they surrender goes to feeding aviators and U-boat captains or actually into the manufacture of bombs and shells. – *From the column, "Topics of the Times," in The New York Times.*

Fair Warning

You Are a Red Cross Member. Your next meeting is Tuesday, April 1, at the Unitarian Parish House at 7:30 P.M. (Postponed from March 25.)

Do you want an active, virulent chapter? If so, your presence at the meeting is your contribution. – *Postcard notice sent to members by a Massachusetts Red Cross Chapter.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

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Correspondence

Refugee Writers

SIR: There is an ominous note in the January issue of Senator Robert Reynolds' paper, The American Vindicator, that Heinrich Mann and Lion Feuchtwanger are in America, and that their presence means "greater competition for American writers." This is terribly alarming, and I now understand why I cannot sell a story to the magazines printing Western and adventure stories. Now, too, that the Senator has set me a-thinking, I realize that I haven't won even a minor prize in a contest since Thomas Mann and Albert Einstein arrived in America.

I am grateful to the Senator for the note of warning. Why, if we continue to let these educated foreigners come into our country, they might raise the whole level of our culture. People might think themselves too good to read Senator Reynolds' paper. We don't want that to happen, do we?

New York City HARRY EDESON

As a Literary Agent Sees It

SIR: The several hundred refugee writers and journalists who have found a haven in this country are faced with a terrible problem. The more famous among them usually have little difficulty in getting published here; but what of the little man, unknown in this country, who used to make a good living at his writing trade in Europe? All Continental and, to a lesser degree, British newspapers regularly accept contributions from outsiders —little essays or short stories, or serials. In America, this type of *feuilleton* is unknown; American newspapers are staff-written. And so, where on the Continent your European free-lance journalist would have a potential market of literally hundreds of outlets for his literary wares, here his stuff is all but unsalable. Writing for the American-type magazine is a highly specialized craft, and even without the language difficulty all but a few of the unknown literati would be totally unable to compete with their American colleagues in this field. The market cannot possibly absorb this material.

These people are trained for nothing but writing. Yet it is essential that, even though they have been robbed of their tools—the language—and their market, these uprooted writers be given a chance to survive. I am intimately familiar with this problem and for years have tried to induce these men and women to resettle in other parts of the country. Unfortunately they seem convinced that, if only they could penetrate to the inner sanctum of some Manhattan newspaper, magazine or publisher, their troubles would be at an end. And yet their only chance lies in finding an occupation—any job—outside the metropolitan area, and learning about this country in places where a refugee is something unique and interesting rather than a familiar problem. They should make friends with Americans rather than stick to the company of their comrades in misery in New York.

The National Refugee Service and similar organizations have done pioneering work in helping these people find a new home outside the big cities of the Eastern seaboard. And rightly so, for only then can these émigrés ever hope to earn a living as useful citizens. It is not at all impossible that after a few years of acclimatization some of them could switch back to their old profession; and their experience in whatever field they select would help them considerably in making this switch. And—once a writer, always a writer—there is nothing to stop them from continuing their writing, in their spare time. But it is essential that they understand that their situation will remain hopeless just so long as they persist in their present attitude.

New York City BARTHOLD FLES

The Brutality of War

SIR: Amen to your editorial on "Indecency in Delaware," denouncing the flogging of prisoners in that state (The New Republic, March 31). You are right in speaking of this horror as a "sport" which has no useful purpose except to "give pleasure."

But why don't you apply this same principle to war—*this* war? It was discovered a long time ago that war is a "sport," which is kept going by, among other things, the fact that it gives pleasure. What a kick we get out of these horrors in Europe! In Delaware we get "the sporting details," as you well put it, of "how many minutes it took to lash each man, and how many lashes each could bear before squirming and jumping." In the same way now in England we get "the sporting details" of how many days of bombing it takes to destroy a city, and how many bombs a city can stand before the people scream and cry out—or just plain take it without collapse. The Delaware whipping, you say, "delighted all sadists last week." The European war is delighting all sadists week after week, and, if your wish is granted, will continue to do so for weeks, months, years to come.

You quote Warden Lawes's denunciation of whipping—"It is brutal and unnecessary. It brutalizes the prisoner, the person who inflicts it, and the country which permits it." The same applies to war! *It is brutal and unnecessary. It brutalizes the conquered, the nation which conquers, and the civilization which permits it.*

Your denunciation of whipping was welcome. I shall take it seriously when you write a similar denunciation of war.

New York City JOHN HAYNES HOLMES

[We respect our old friend John Haynes Holmes for the courage he shows in sticking to his principles of non-resistance in these wartime days. We quite agree that war is brutal and brutalizing and that some people, usually at a considerable distance from the scene of the fighting, let themselves look upon it as a sporting affair. But we would say that the degree to which war is necessary depends not on the warmth with which it is denounced but on the degree of foresight which is used in preventing it. The present fact is that the terrible power and the unmistakable intentions of Nazi Germany threaten the existence of our country. Resistance to that danger is certainly also the part of intelligence. Mr. Holmes's analogy between the whipping of criminals and war seems less than exact, but even so, would he maintain that because it is stupid and brutal to whip criminals, society should not protect itself from them or attempt to deter them? – THE EDITORS]

Teachers

SIR: Your editorial, "Communist Teachers," in the issue of March 17 presents admirably the issues at stake in the New York situation. Not one of us in the AFT Executive Council which unanimously voted for investigation of Locals 5, 537 and 192 would refuse the right of a Communist to earn his living in the teaching profession. However, it is difficult to understand how a teacher can be not guilty of "unbecoming conduct" if he is subject to discipline by an outside party of which he is openly

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or secretly a member and, hence, automatically must change his mind overnight to conform with that party line.

Then, too, the relationship of a teacher to the community is different from that of other workers. If the schools do not retain the support of organized labor and the confidence of the parents and of the citizens who foot the bill, it is impossible for education to advance.

I only hope that we can set up the group of scholars suggested by you and not leave investigation to the mixed motivation and dubious methods of such a political body as the Coudert Committee. Meanwhile we are carrying on the fight to set the union free from minority caucus control, which is an indispensable preliminary to a strengthened teacher's-union movement throughout the United States.

New York City MARK STARR, Vice-president, AFT

Kind Old Hitler?

SIR: Can you explain why the Kaiser and von Hindenburg in their declining years appear as "lovable old men," though in their time they were more bitterly hated than Hitler? Certainly they held human life as cheaply. Are we to look forward to the day when editors will speak fondly of three kind old men—Hitler, Goering and Goebbels—while a new set of devils will have the world by the ears? Here's something for historians to explain and for warmongers to ponder.

North Rose, N. Y. L. J. SALTER

Descendants and Dictatorship

SIR: The statement of Miss Brand, recording secretary of the Descendants of the American Revolution, quoted in your correspondence column of March 10, requires a reply. We who resigned took issue with the Executive Committee for sending to the House and Senate Foreign Relations Committees a statement condemning HR 1776 and purporting to be the opinion of the organization. Miss Brand states that a copy of the resolution *re* policy was mailed to every chapter. Upon receiving it, I sent it to every member of my chapter, and to the Executive Committee I mailed my statement of disagreement. Before my chapter could act, the Executive Committee assumed the responsibility of placing the members of the organization on record against HR 1776, well knowing that there has existed among the membership a sharp difference of opinion about it. Loudly invoking the Bill of Rights, the committee performed as dictator. This is the issue, and this is why we resigned, withdrawing our support of the persons who have taken control of the organization.

Cambridge, Mass. HELEN TUFTS BAILIE

[The New Republic has also received a letter from Charles W. Putnam, president of the Washington Chapter of the Descendants. Mr. Putnam says that the Washington Chapter did not receive a statement from Miss Brand. He believes, however, that members who have resigned should reconsider their action, "since the society cannot survive if it takes its differences of opinion so hard." – THE EDITORS]

Letter Writer Suspects Editor

SIR: Bruce Bliven talks like an old-time socialist growing despondent because the last election increased the vote for Debs by only three in the election district instead of the expected five ("Fortifying Flour," The New Republic, March 24). Mr. Bliven says that the crusade for wholewheat bread is almost a complete failure. It is men like Mr. Bliven who keep the Union News from adding a line of wholewheat bread to their ham and cheese sandwiches peddled through the day coaches hereabouts. If Mr. Bliven ate wholewheat bread, instead of demanding white, he would know that no sandwich stand is so poor or remote as not to boast its wholewheat loaf—always excepting the Union News. Complete failure indeed!

I am no good at machinery, including the rolling mills. But white flour disappeared for the duration in America along about 1918, and turned a brownish gray—probably from nicotine, but surely not from new machinery.

Besides I thought all liberals eschewed white bread. I am highly suspicious of your Mr. B. B.

New York City F. A. SIEVERMAN JR.

[An editor gets used to being blamed for almost everything; but even so I am a little surprised to find that it is my fault that people don't eat wholewheat bread. – B. B.]

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Supplementing "The Battle of the Bible Belt" (The New Republic, March 10) Winifred L. Chappel, Little Rock, Arkansas, writes to tell about the People's Institute of Applied Religion, the headquarters of which is Lincoln Hotel, Little Rock. "Preacher Claude Williams is gathering into short institutes or 'schools' selected men and women, Negro and white, from among the grass-roots preachers, who work with their hands during the week and preach on Sunday. In the informality of the institutes, these key persons are encouraged to tell about the social plight of their people—which they share. By means of visual-education charts and simple sermon material, they are shown that . . . the Bible, and indeed the whole Judeo-Christian heritage, has dynamic significance for the here and now."

The debate on aid to Britain continues. John L. Gruber, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, says, "I know that if Hitler started this war, imperialism is the root cause of it. And that if you believe that Churchill, Halifax, Hoare *et al.* are profoundly and sincerely sympathetic with democracy and the common man—then you are naïve indeed, and Jefferson's judgment with regard to England was stupid and shortsighted." For documents on Jefferson's position on coöperation with England in time of danger, Mr. Gruber should consult the article, "The Threat to American Security," by Edward Meade Earle, in the spring 1941 issue of The Yale Review.

The Society of Independent Artists will hold its Silver Jubilee exhibition at the American Fine Arts Society Galleries, 215 West Fifty-seventh Street, New York City, April 17 to May 7. Fred Bucholz, secretary, notes that the no-jury, no-prize system has brought mediocrity and sensation-seekers to the society's exhibitions—and has brought many good artists and has resulted in "discoveries," such as that of Emile Branchard and Arnold Friedman.

From the Workers' Defense League comes word that Odell Waller, Negro sharecropper convicted of killing his white landlord (The New Republic, December 16), has been granted a writ of error and another stay of execution. "The sharecropper was shooting in self-defense," says the WDL. "He had been denied his share of the crop, and his old mother and wife . . . had been evicted from their shack while he was away looking for work. The landlord—himself a poor man, a victim of the cotton system of the South—was a hard man, who carried a gun because of bitter quarrels with his own son." Defense attorneys also contend that Virginia law violates the Fourteenth Amendment, by prohibiting non-poll-tax-payers from serving on juries and thus automatically excluding sharecroppers.

Poets' Fraternal Corner. – The April issue of Poetry is a Canadian Poets' Number, dedicated to John W. Defoe, editor-in-chief of The Winnipeg Free Press. Poetry hopes for a more widespread knowledge of Canadian verse in the United States (and Canada).

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Remembering Hart Crane

SOME YEARS AGO in The New Republic, I told how Hart Crane used to write his poems. But since the poems are still being read, nine years after his suicide, in April, 1932, and since the meaning of his life is still being argued about, the story is worth repeating in more detail.

There would be a Sunday afternoon party on Tory Hill, near Patterson, New York, in Slater Brown's unpainted and unremodeled farmhouse. I can't remember any of the jokes that were made, or why we laughed at them so hard; I can remember only the general atmosphere of youth and poverty and high spirits. Hart would be laughing twice as hard as the rest of us in the big, low-ceilinged kitchen; he would be drinking twice as much hard cider and contributing more than his share of the crazy metaphors and overblown epithets. Gradually he would fall silent and a little later we would find that he had disappeared. In lulls that began to interrupt the laughter, now Hart was gone, we would hear a new hubbub through the walls of the next room—the phonograph playing a Cuban rumba, the typewriter clacking simultaneously; then the phonograph would run down and the typewriter stop while Hart changed the record, perhaps to a torch song, perhaps to Ravel's "Bolero." Sometimes he stamped across the room, declaiming to the four walls and the slow spring rain.

An hour later, after the rain had stopped, he would appear in the kitchen or on the croquet court, his face brick-red, his eyes burning, his already iron-gray hair bristling straight up from his skull. He would be chewing a five-cent cigar which he had forgotten to light. In his hands would be two or three sheets of typewritten manuscript, with words crossed out and new lines scrawled in. "Read that," he would say. "Isn't that the *grrrea*test poem ever written!"

We would read it obediently, Allen Tate perhaps making a profound comment. The rest of us would get practically nothing out of it except the rhythm like that of a tom-tom and a few startling images. But we would all agree that it was absolutely superb. In Hart's state of exaltation there was nothing else we could say without driving him to rage or tears.

But this story, which I have told before, contains neither the real beginning nor the real end. I later discovered that Hart would have been meditating over that particular poem for months or even years, scribbling verses on pieces of paper that he carried in his pockets and meanwhile waiting for the moment of pure inspiration when he could put them all together. In his patience he reminded me of another friend, a famous killer of woodchucks, who instead of shooting at them from a distance with a high-powered rifle, and probably missing them, used to frighten them into their holes and wait till they came out again. Sometimes when they were slow about it, he said that he used to charm them out by playing his mouth-organ. In the same fashion, Hart tried to charm his inspiration out of its hiding place by drinking and laughing and playing the phonograph.

As for the end of the story, it might be delayed for several weeks. Painfully, perseveringly—and dead sober—Hart would revise his new poem, clarifying its images, correcting its meter and searching through dictionaries and thesauruses for exactly the right word. "The seal's wide spindrift gaze toward paradise," in the second of his "Voyages," was the result of a search that lasted for several days; I was then working in the same office and can remember his roar of jubilation when he found the word "spindrift" in Webster's Unabridged. Even after the poem had been completed, the manuscript mailed to Poetry or The Dial and perhaps accepted, he would still have changes to make. In the formal sense, he was badly educated, having left high school before he was graduated and having filled his head since then with an assortment of sometimes profound but uncoördinated knowledge. He was not even very intelligent, in the conventional sense of the word; as a problem-solving animal he was less than competent. But nobody I knew, and very few people in the history of literature, were willing to spend so much time in perfecting a single poem to the moment of what seemed to be absolute rightness.

What were the general purposes that guided Hart in these patient revisions? The question is difficult to answer precisely, yet he had a clear if never explicitly defined notion of what he wanted to do, and it might be summed up in four verbs. He wanted to *see*, to *suggest*, to *construct* and to *intoxicate*.

To see was a phrase to which he gave a special meaning. He was not usually concerned with seeing the exact shape of things—though on occasions he could become a faithful realist—nor was he trying in most of his work to portray their particularity and essence. Instead his aim was to reveal their hidden correspondences with the rest of nature. Something more was involved than the fondness for metaphor that is common to poets and children. Hart's purpose was closer to the deliberate "hallucination of the senses" that Rimbaud had advocated sixty years before. "I habituated myself," Rimbaud said in an often quoted passage of "A Season in Hell," "to simple hallucination: I would quite sincerely see a mosque instead of a factory, a school of drummers composed of angels, carriages on the roads of the sky, a drawing-room at the bottom of a lake: monsters, mysteries; the announcement of a musical comedy would cause horrors to rise before me." And Crane, in much the same fashion, habituated himself to looking at one thing and quite sincerely seeing another: a tree would be an old man leaning on a crutch, a cloud would be a threat, a landscape would be music by Haydn. "Look at that pile of dirty snow," he would roar—for he was always roaring. "Just like H——!" and he would mention the name of an actress famous for never taking off her make-up. In his poems, the same process is carried much farther: a bell-rope "gathers God at dawn," every recess in a speakeasy "coins a squint," and, as he drinks himself into a frenzy, "A leopard ranging always in the brain, asserts a vision."

To suggest, his second aim, was one that he never forgot: he was determined to make each phrase evoke not one but several of these hallucinations. After reading Ouspensky's "Tertium Organum," he had conceived the project of inventing a new metaphorical language, a kind of shorthand in which each word would have a whole range of meanings. And although he later abandoned this idea, he continued to choose his words with the complete absorp-

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tion of a man fitting pieces into a jigsaw puzzle. Once he sent a five-page, single-spaced typewritten letter to Harriet Monroe, the editor of Poetry, in an effort to explain just what he meant by a poem of sixteen lines, "At Melville's Tomb." Of a single sentence in the poem—"The dice of drowned men's bones he saw bequeath/An embassy" —he said in the letter:

> Dice bequeath an embassy, in the first place, by being ground (in this connection only, of course) in little cubes from the bones of drowned men by the action of the sea, and are finally thrown up on the sand, having "numbers" but no identification. These being the bones of dead men who never completed their voyage, it seems legitimate to refer to them as the only surviving evidence of certain messages undelivered, mute evidence of certain things, experiences that the dead mariners might have had to deliver. Dice as a symbol of chance and circumstance [are] also implied.

The whole letter, quoted in an appendix to Philip Horton's life of the poet, is an extraordinarily clear statement of his method. But besides proving that this particular poem is packed with meaning, it proves that no reader except a gifted and painstaking student could get the full meaning out of it, unless—and I shall return to this point—he enjoyed a moment of frenzied intuition.

To construct, which I have mentioned as Hart's third aim, was an instinct to the fulfilment of which he devoted many hours. Even the brief lyrics included in his first book, "White Buildings," show a surprising architectural talent. There is never any question of his merely jotting down a vision, as if he were shooting a bird on the wing. In life he yielded to his impressions; in his writing he tried to reduce them to absolute order, or else to a contrived and deliberate chaos. Each of his poems has an inner structure—perhaps of question and answer, perhaps of conflict and resolution, perhaps of a local incident judged, in the last stanza, by universal principles. Each poem has movement as well as structure; and the movement is not only of actions or ideas but also of emotions and associations, so that the poet seems to be working simultaneously on several planes. And if these remarks apply to his lyrics, they are all the more true of the longer poems composing "The Bridge," where he reveals an architectural boldness and complexity that few poets of our time have even approached.

But finally, by all these means and others—not only by vision and suggestion and construction, but by his pounding meters and continual nervous excitation—he was aiming to *intoxicate* his readers. He thought of himself sometimes as a seer opening spiritual gates; and he believed that his readers could understand his meaning intuitively if he was able to induce in them the emotional states in which the poems were written. But those states were sometimes not so much mystical as hysterical; they were his reaction to alcohol, jazz, machinery, laughter, intellectual stimulation and the madness of New York in the Coolidge era. At their worst, his poems are ineffective unless read in something approaching that atmosphere, with a drink at your elbow, the phonograph blaring a rumba and somebody shouting into your ear, "Isn't that marvelous!" At their best, however, the poems do their work unaided except by their own glitter and violence. At their very best, as in "The River," they have an emotional power that has not been equaled by any other American poet of our century.

Hart drank to write: he drank to induce the state of mind that made possible the visions his poems tried to convey. But the formula could be followed only for a very few years, and in fact was completely effective only for two periods of about a month each, in 1926 and 1927, when working at top speed he wrote four-fifths of "The Bridge." After that, more and more alcohol was needed, so much that it ceased to stimulate and merely befuddled him. He drank in Village speakeasies and Brooklyn waterfront dives; he insulted everybody within hearing or shouted that he was Christopher Marlowe; then waking after a night in jail he drank again to forget his sense of guilt. And he really forgot it, for the moment. By early afternoon, all the outrageous things he had done the night before became merely funny, became an epic misadventure to be embroidered—"and then I began throwing chairs out of the window," he would say with an enormous chuckle. Everybody would laugh and Hart would pound the table, calling for another bottle.

I suppose that no other poet, not even Poe, heaped so many tribulations on his friends. Shouts, recriminations, obscenity, broken furniture were the commonplaces of an evening spent with him. For a long time nobody did anything about it, except to complain in a humorous way. The 1920's had their own moral principles, one of which, and perhaps the best observed, was not to pass moral judgments on other people, especially creative artists. But the real reason why Hart's wildness was tolerated was that he had a genuine warmth and affection for the people around him. To hear him laugh, to receive his clumsy, kind attentions when ill, to hear his honest and discerning judgment of other people's work, to realize that he was always loyal to his friends and praised them except to their faces, was enough to cancel out all his misdeeds, even though they were renewed daily, with daily apologies.

The last time I saw him was in March, 1931, shortly after he received a Guggenheim fellowship. One Sunday I paid a visit to Peter Blume, who was spending the winter in a Connecticut farmhouse seven miles from Tory Hill. Hart was there, clear-eyed and in a grand good humor. The day, like so many others I had spent with him, was divided into four stages. The first of these was a walk together along a country road, talking about ourselves and poetry and what foreign country he should visit during the term of his fellowship. Hart was full of the delighted interest he had always shown in the world and in other people. Then, during the afternoon, he found a bottle of whiskey the Blumes had hidden—by that time nobody brought out liquor when Hart came calling—and the second stage began. The good humor was transformed into exhilaration, then into frenzy. He read aloud a long poem by Harry Crosby, about sailing up the Nile in the bright sunshine, and roared out the refrain while he pounded on the table:

> Let the sun shine!
> And the sun shone.

At first he was intoxicated as much by language as by alcohol. But gradually, as he continued reading aloud and drinking, his eyes narrowed and other people ceased to

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exist for him: he was now roaring and wailing for himself alone. Then came the third stage of intense and lonely suffering. While we were driving fifteen miles to the station through the spring darkness, Hart kept repeating, "The white fences . . . the white fences," and then more loudly, "Oh, the interminable white Connecticut fences," as if the white posts seen dimly in the headlights were a symbol of monotony and imprisonment; they were the fences that all his life had kept him away from something, he didn't know what. He slept in the train, said goodbye hastily in the station and took a taxicab to Brooklyn. And that was the fourth stage I had learned to expect, though I never saw more than the beginning of it—the stage when Hart roamed the Brooklyn waterfront, looking for happy encounters or escaping from phantoms. That day everything had followed a foreordained pattern, and tomorrow would follow the pattern too. When I went home that night, I began to think of Hart as already dying. And later, when I heard the full story of his year in Mexico, it seemed to me not so much the adventures of a living poet as the pathology and symptomatology of a fatal disease.

MALCOLM COWLEY

Books in Review

The Struggle for the East

AT THIS TIME, when the continuance of Kuomintang-Communist coöperation hangs in the balance, certain parts of Edgar Snow's latest report[1] from the Far Eastern front become required reading. The section toward the end of the book called "Unity or Destruction," as well as two earlier sections (pp. 127-45) dealing with the Fourth Route Army, are particularly vital and timely.

Early in 1940, writes Snow, the Eighth Route commanders made public a formal statement to the government noting that "in the last two and a half years the casualties of the Eighth Route Army have aggregated about 100,000 (or almost twice the size of the original combat force in Shansi), while it has inflicted more than 200,000 casualties against the enemy. Of the enemy's forty divisions in China, seventeen are engaged in fighting the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies. Thus we are occupying the attention of two-fifths of the total enemy forces."

Yet, since the middle of 1938, as Snow indicates, anti-Communist groups in the Kuomintang and in the government have zealously sought to undermine these efficient allies in the common struggle against Japan. Snow names some of the groups engaged in this work of sabotage: the Blueshirts under Tai Li, the "Regenerationists" under General Hu Tsung-nan, the Army Gendarmes and the Three Principles Youth Brigades. Their activities, he says, would be called fifth-columnism in any other setting, but they are supported by some of the highest-placed officials in the Chungking government, notably Ho Ying-chin, the War Minister, and Chen Li-fu, party boss of the Kuomintang. From pin-prickings, such as the detention of students bound for Yenan, suppression of the Communist press, arrest of individual men and officers of the Eighth and Fourth Armies, the series of "incidents" passed into a phase of executions of arrested Communists and, finally, of armed attacks in force on Communist units.

All this, be it noted, had occurred long before the recent events. The facts which Snow details form merely the background for the present crisis in Kuomintang-Communist relations, caused by the treatment meted out to the Fourth Route Army. In ordering the Fourth Army north of the Yangtze River, no regard was had for military consequences. The move destroyed the Fourth Army's guerilla base south of the Yangtze River, which had been more than two years in building and on which military effectiveness had depended. Deprived of this organizational base, the Kuomintang regulars who came in were no match for the Fourth Army in combat efficiency. Japanese troops, or their puppet supporters, immediately retook part of the area vacated by the Fourth Army, and the whole Japanese military position in the lower Yangtze valley has definitely improved.

The bulk of the Fourth Army, some 90,000 strong, is still intact north of the Yangtze River. But the Chungking authorities have ordered it to proceed north of the Yellow River, and further clashes may occur at any time in the wide region between the two rivers. Most threatening of all is the increasing ascendancy of the fascist-minded elements at Chungking, and their growing influence on Chiang Kai-shek's attitude. The ear of the Generalissimo, according to recent visitors to Chungking, has become deaf to liberal voices. This factor, more than anything else, has undoubtedly motivated the Eighth Route Army's action in reconstituting the National Revolutionary Military Committee and submitting stiff demands to the Chungking authorities. As Snow points out, the Communist leaders had for a long time "seemed reluctant to air their grievances for fear of making the situation worse." Now, however, the issue is sharply and openly joined. The outcome will certainly determine China's immediate future, and may govern the scope of Japanese moves in the Pacific this spring.

Snow's book is a comprehensive survey of the years of battle in Asia since 1937, including much more than a discussion of Chinese internal politics. In this field, nevertheless, he is still the undisputed master, telling honestly and fearlessly things that not a few would prefer to have lie hidden. His vignettes of the Kuomintang bureaucracy, of General Hu Tsung-nan's role, of the inadequate mobilization of China's war potential, of the inadvisability of granting Chungking unearmarked foreign loans, and many other passing comments are douches of acid. They serve a function if they help to cure whatever naïve optimism exists among us that all goes well with China. Much yet remains to be done if a democratic, unified and socially progressive

[1] The Battle for Asia, by Edgar Snow. New York: Random House. 443 pages. $3.75.

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China is to emerge from the searching test it has undergone.

There are discussions, also, of China's problems of wartime economics, and especially of "the Indusco line." Snow and his wife, Nym Wales, were the originators, along with Rewi Alley, of the Chinese Industrial Coöperatives, and these effective agencies of democratic training and social-economic welfare in China lie close to his heart. A partially expressed fear that the official bureaucracy may yet blight the promise of the industrial coöperatives occasionally appears in his writing at this point.

He deals, finally, with Japan's position and prospects, and also with the international policies of the USSR, Britain and the United States in the Far East. He sees Japanese imperialism doomed in the long run, but he is unconvinced that collapse is near and points to disturbing signs of consolidation in Japan's occupation of China. His treatment of Soviet, American and British policy will stimulate many questions, and arouse some controversy. In the concluding chapters he outlines a war program that would include all the colonial nations, under conditions of immediate or post-war emancipation, in the struggle against fascism. Not all will follow Snow in the details of this ambitious program, but it serves to underscore an important point: that the emancipation of the colonies, and particularly of China and India, will be a key test for the democracies if they are to dictate the post-war settlement. T. A. BISSON

Silent Sam

Johnson without Boswell, edited by Hugh Kingsmill. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 323 pages. $2.50.

HAD BOSWELL never written a word, Samuel Johnson would still be the best-known figure in eighteenth-century England. He was the subject of seven other contemporary biographies, a dominant figure in a dozen diaries and memoirs, and his death occasioned a tidal wave of eulogies, laments, odes and personal recollections—with a considerable backwash of satires and lampoons.

From this material, and from Johnson's own letters and fragmentary autobiography, Mr. Kingsmill has selected anecdotes and incidents that illustrate, supplement and correct Boswell's portrait. Parts of the book parallel passages in Boswell and so permit the reader to judge for himself Boswell's accuracy and skill. But for the most part the editor is concerned with those aspects of Johnson to which Boswell failed to give due emphasis—his gayety and tenderness, his loneliness and yearning for affection.

Boswell, as he himself laments, shows too much of "Grave Sam, and great Sam, and solemn Sam, and learned Sam." A "wonderful superstitious love of mystery" was a part of his nature, and an "awful and majestick Philosopher" was a more pleasing subject to him than a humorous but sick and lonely old man. He even felt a little guilty about their easy intimacy, and after spending an unusually pleasant evening with his hero wrote in his journal: "I missed that awful reverence with which I used to contemplate Mr. Samuel Johnson in the complex magnitude of his literary, moral and religious character."

Boswell tried to remedy the limitation which this attitude imposed upon his work. He described one or two of Johnson's flights into nonsense, but it is plain that they puzzled him and left him uneasy. He was pathetically aware that other people saw more of Johnson's light-heartedness than he did and he asked Fanny Burney to let him see her notes, that he might show more of "gay Sam, agreeable Sam [and] pleasant Sam." But Miss Burney knew the value of her anecdotes and hung on to them.

There are distortions in Boswell as well as limitations. His Johnson—which is to say the popular conception of Johnson—is more irritable and explosive than Mrs. Thrale's or Fanny Burney's or Murphy's. Johnson was not the soul of patience but he wasn't so irascible as Boswell made him. Boswell goaded and teased him in order to excite responses that would be good material. "Sir," he suddenly asked, "if you were shut up in a castle and a new-born child with you, what would you do?" . . . "Pray, sir, have you ever been accustomed to wear a nightcap?"

These experiments went beyond words. In Scotland he took Johnson to meet the eccentric Lord Monboddo. "I knew Lord Monboddo and Dr. Johnson did not love each other," Boswell admits, "yet I was curious to see them together." And he suggested to one of their hostesses that Johnson might like a cold sheep's head for breakfast, knowing quite well that the very sight of it would disgust him. "I was entertained," he wrote, "to see their ludicrous cross purposes."

The sources from which Mr. Kingsmill has drawn are to be found in every good library. But he has done a service in bringing them to the attention of the common reader. His book will add to the pleasure which Boswell has given and, by calling attention to Johnson as a man and a writer rather than merely the subject of a biography, may direct some readers to Johnson's own works.

It is regrettable, though, that he has not done this more directly. Surely the most important thing in Johnson without Boswell is Johnson himself, and Johnson himself is best shown in his own writings. All Johnson's biographers assumed that posterity would be interested in what they had to say because it would be curious to know more about a man whose writings were so impressive. That Johnson would be known some day *only* by what they said about him could never have entered their minds. And it would seem the primary duty of one who seeks to rescue Johnson from the queer oblivion of too much biography to show what Johnson himself actually thought and said.

There is, for example, the question of Johnson's "conservatism." This lay essentially in his refusal to accept the new social and economic morality which Calvin had consecrated for the rich. He did not agree that the chief end of government was to protect property, but held stoutly to the then reactionary opinion that all property was confiscable and all contracts revokable in the general good. The fashionable dogma that poverty was the product of vice and incompetence and wealth the reward of virtue and ability, made him angry. To Boswell's embarrassment, he was coldly hostile to the great catchwords of the day, "liberty" and "patriotism." The clamor of slave owners for "liberty" seemed to him only a demand for further special privileges and the "patriotism" of profiteers only a refuge for scoundrels. No wonder that in the triumph of the new morality such ideas were damned as "conservative" and relegated to oblivion. But now, when those who profited by this morality impudently claim the sanction of "tradition" and

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"conservatism," it is well to bring this great champion of true conservatism against them. Mr. Kingsmill has brought him out, but he hasn't let him speak very freely.

BERGEN EVANS

Roman Life and Portraits

Daily Life in Ancient Rome, by Jérôme Carcopino. Translated by E. O. Lorimer. Edited, with bibliography and notes, by Henry T. Rowell. Yale University Press. 357 pages, illustrated. $4.
Roman Portraits. Phaidon Edition. 120 plates; photographs by J. Schneider-Lengyel; foreword by L. Goldscheider. New York: Oxford University Press. $3.

M. CARCOPINO, whose authority in his field is eminent, presents here a survey of Roman daily life in the light of the most recent information. His sources are threefold—the literary, the epigraphical and the archeological: the developments and excavations of the last two decades, particularly in the two latter fields, have made it necessary to revise much of the former literary evidence.

Fully aware of the fluid nature of the *mores* of any society, M. Carcopino has tried to restrict himself in both time and place—in the latter to the city of Rome itself. He points out that serious errors were made in earlier studies by concluding that what happened in a city like Herculaneum was also typical of what might have happened in Rome; and he makes use of an argument of Professor Rostovtsev to remind us that the life of the townsman was so different from the life of the countryside that it engendered "a fierce and silent struggle which pierced the dyke that protected the privileged classes from the barbarian flood. The peasant pariah abetted the invading barbarian."

As regards time, he says, he has deliberately confined himself to the second century A. D., from Claudius to Hadrian; but he has not confined himself too strictly. He makes many allusions to the republican period and to the chaotic days when republicanism collapsed before dictatorship, and an agrarian economy succumbed to mercantile imperialism. He quotes not only Martial, Juvenal and Petronius; but also Horace, Ovid and Cicero.

The scheme of his book provides, first, for an examination of the physical and moral background of Roman life. There are chapters on the extent and population of the city; the houses and streets. In this detail particularly, the conclusions are considerably modified from earlier findings, as it becomes increasingly clear that Rome was almost incredibly a city of apartment dwellers, one illustration showing a block of dwellings not at all unlike a development in the Bronx or Jackson Heights. There are also chapters on society and social classes; marriage, women and the family; education and religion. The second part of the text proper deals with the day's routine and the shows and spectacles.

The style is direct and fresh and the text is copiously illustrated. To the original, translated from the French by E. O. Lorimer, there is added a bibliography and a series of notes by Professor Henry T. Rowell of Johns Hopkins.

In "Roman Portraits" we have some 120 plates, life size or larger, photographed by J. Schneider-Lengyel from various original statues in the museums of Europe. Here are the people whose occupations M. Carcopino describes. In his introductory remarks, Mr. Goldscheider advises us that in the art of sculpture the Romans achieved real greatness, and that, however great the changes of style in the course of four centuries, the realistic trend was preserved. No one, leafing through these pages, would be inclined to suspect the sculptors of intentions of flattery. Here we see, almost too close-up, a great variety of men and women: the grim and austere, the grim and arrogant; the fashionable and haughty; the gentle and sweet (rare); the sensitive and good-humored (not often); the podgy, purse-proud and pompous (dominant). There are faces, occasionally, whose lineaments are Semitic or Moorish; also Gauls or Thracians. There are, here and there, the elderly, lean and morbid; or baby-faces, or young men or girls; but mainly the established—prime-of-life, late-middle-aged, and established. There is one peasant, and one chariot-driver; but mainly those in authority, though who can say to what class belonged the portraits of this Unknown Man, or that Unknown Woman? There are faces one would not be surprised to encounter at a Chamber of Commerce, or NAM dinner: Galba, No. 36, or Vitellius, 41; and Maximinus Thrax, 83, unhelmeted, would look all right in there at tackle for the Chicago Bears. And at the end of the book, where the realistic tendency has taken on expressionist forms, and the hand of the sculptor has been supplemented by the chisel of time, there are some really frightening surrealist apparitions.

The book is indexed, and contains a short bibliography, a chronological survey of the main periods of Roman sculpture, and an informative foreword.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES

The Paris Peace Conference

Versailles Twenty Years After, by Paul Birdsall. New York: Reynal and Hitchcock. 349 pages. $3.

IT IS grimly ironical that the first book to attempt a comprehensive account of the Paris Peace Conference and of the making of the Treaty of Versailles appears at a moment when the United States may be on the eve of entering a Second World War. Mr. Birdsall has mastered all the voluminous materials of the Conference—not only documents, but memoirs and *pièces justificatives*. He threads his way sure-footedly through the fights over colonies and the mandates principle; the Japanese demands for Shantung; the struggle over the League of Nations and the disarmament of Germany; the dismemberment of Germany on the west and on the east, and the indemnity and war-guilt clauses.

Since some of these struggles were going on at the same time, the story has to be a complicated one, but Mr. Birdsall makes its moral extremely simple. The forces of righteousness, headed by President Wilson, were battling—and Mr. Birdsall thinks they battled rather successfully—against the forces of greed and selfishness and European intrigue and old-style diplomacy. In his view Colonel House was not too valiant a warrior. "On every major issue he advocated a compromise and concession . . . beyond definite limits set by Wilson." His was the "familiar role of errand boy and intermediary in behalf of the British." Nor does Mr. Birdsall like Lloyd George, who was "always adept at sleight of hand" and a "slippery premier" who made

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"efforts at blackmail." Lloyd George had an "inveterate habit of being statesmanlike at other people's expense."

Was that not precisely Wilson's position? Could he be statesmanlike at the expense of *his* country? Knowing full well that the war debts could not be repaid to the United States, he, nevertheless, was unable to throw them into the settlement, and thus attempt to stand out further against the reparations clauses. Mr. Birdsall thinks that they were the chief defect of the Treaty, which was "too severe economically." Much more catastrophic, however, was the economic independence which the political children of the settlement received at Versailles, St. Germain and Trianon. They could and did erect thousands of kilometers of new customs frontiers. At once they began to make commercial warfare on each other. To these dangers the Paris plenipotentiaries seemed indifferent. Wilson could not make his "statesmanship" comprehend such a problem because he knew that no trade arrangements were possible between the United States and a reconstructed Europe and that we would insist on high tariff walls, which we would be unwilling to lower, let alone demolish. And on the chief failure Mr. Birdsall is silent. President Wilson wanted the Covenant to be a "vehicle of life." Instead, the treaties were "straitjackets" which had to be burst by war. There was no effective machinery to accomplish international change.

On matters other than victories, defeats and draws, Mr. Birdsall frequently writes suggestively and sometimes incompletely and unconvincingly. He gives a more detailed account of what may have been behind the Wilson-House "break" than I have seen elsewhere and thinks that differences on principle may have been more decisive than pettiness on the one side and vanity on the other. (Curiously he does not make much use of Mrs. Wilson's "My Memoir.") He speaks of difficulties with and among the technical advisers at the Conference, but does not attempt to deal in the large with a question which General Smuts has declared is the most important one facing representative government: the proper use of the expert.

"The record clearly shows," says Mr. Birdsall, "that on every major question but that of reparations, the Treaty of Versailles would have been a worse treaty had Wilson remained in Washington." How can he know? The Treaty might well have been "worse" had the United States not participated in making it, and there was certainly a case for Wilson going to Paris. Staying there, and, as head of a state, engaging in detailed negotiations with ministers, was another matter. In Washington, the President would have been able to stick to his guns far more successfully than it was possible for him to do in Paris. One always compromises more readily with negotiators whom one has got to know and whom one meets face to face. Mr. Birdsall's conclusion is that "with all his mistakes" Wilson "emerges as the only man of real stature at Paris." He is wrong. Lloyd George and Clemenceau were men of stature, even though their contours seemed displeasing to the observer.

Finally, may I hope that some day a publisher who believes that a page looks better with its bottom bare of footnotes and therefore hides them in an appendix, will read such a book after it appears? He will waste many minutes in trying to identify the pertinent references. May he then look up sales figures and estimate how many readers have been similarly annoyed!

LINDSAY ROGERS

Mystics and Rebels

Owen Glendower: An Historical Novel, by John Cowper Powys. New York: Simon and Schuster. 2 vols.; 963 pages. $5.

WE ALL know Glendower through Shakespeare, who presents the Welsh hero as a strutting and irascible star-gazer: Owen was politically in the wrong camp and, besides, Shakespeare liked to kid the Welsh. John Cowper Powys' two-volume novel gives us a different Owen—mystic, with a power of letting his spirit float away from his body, but in the main a practical and brilliant leader of an oppressed minority. Owen could whip the armies of Henry IV so long as the Welsh kept fighting a nuisance war, but he could never establish a peaceful, independent Welsh nation. At the end, Mr. Powys gives him a dramatic and impressive death scene in the traditionally magic Welsh mountains.

The story of Owen's revolt is presented through a thick broth of Cowper-Powysian prose. The central consciousness is sometimes Owen's, but oftener it is that of his kinsman on the illegitimate side, Rhisiart ab Owen. At the end of the book Rhisiart is a famous English lawyer, far removed from the youth of Welsh and Norman blood who had left Oxford for Wales to become Owen's secretary. Rhisiart is easily the most oversexed character in all the hectic literature of today: "He had the feeling that his fate was advancing upon him in the form of a vast pair of dusky feminine breasts, each with a crater where the nipple should have been out of which proceeded fire and smoke!" Rhisiart's entire approach to the sexual is like this; he sets a new record even for a Powys hero by having erotic inclinations toward almost every character in the book. Rhisiart is irrevocably bound to two girls, but his sexual impulses run on beyond them to every girl in the story, and even to old women, pages and dwarfs. Owen, historically a noted libertine, is shown as a renouncer of temptation, at least in one big self-denial scene. As in the previous novels by this author, the motives of behavior are not easy to understand: here the obscurity is more in keeping with the background, and helps to suggest the world of Celtic fable and of dark old chronicles. The book is frequently effective on the atmospheric side: the guerilla Owen, moving from place to place in wild Wales, keeps a stately court in ruined castles, where his retinue are to be seen mostly by torchlight—savage hillmen, a mad friar screaming that King Richard still lives, the old seneschal who cherishes a famous ancient sword, the bards, bowmen, sorceresses, the flamboyant Hotspur and all the rest, in vivid costumes amid the shattered mystic castles—all these have the medieval flavor.

Yet there is another aspect of the book to be considered before the reader hazards the 963 pages. It is bad in so many ways that one wonders how it ever got published in its present state. The story is disproportionate, wind-baggy, and loaded with references to legends that only a Cymric specialist would know; it is lumpishly written, and full of stylistic ineptitudes. But if the book is read it will be for the unquestionable power of its dramatic moments, and for its evocation of the past. At least one can say for it that it is a most unusual combination of the impressive and the goofy.

HARRY THORNTON MOORE

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A Reader's List

SOUTH OF GOD, by Cedric Belfrage (Modern Age, $2.50). Something new and exciting in the way of biography. The story of Claude Williams, Tennessee preacher, who turned from Presbyterian to Proletarian minister. Having parted company with the Church elders he remains on friendly terms with God—a God who is all for the CIO, dialectical materialism and equal rights for Negroes. His, you may imagine, is a life of unselfishnes and incredibly tough going, and Mr. Belfrage knows how it should be told.

WHITTLING BOY, The Story of Eli Whitney, by Roger Burlingame (Harcourt, Brace, $3). The first biography of the great, neglected Yankee inventor whose chief contribution was not the cotton gin but the idea of tooling for mass production and the principle of interchangeable parts. Like a thoughtful novel in its subtle handling of Whitney's New England farm background and the effects of his inventor's bent and troubles on his personality and private life. First-rate in spite of scanty source materials.

LANTERNS ON THE LEVEE, by William Alexander Percy (Knopf, $3). Autobiography of a Southern aristocrat, a poet and planter whose memoirs are likewise the memoirs of the Mississippi Delta. You may not agree with all Mr. Percy says, but you have rarely heard his side stated with so much wisdom, gentleness and wit. Since the regime he lived for and by is a passing one, set this down as a very creditable swan song.

LINCOLN ON THE EVE OF '61, by Henry Villard, edited by Harold G. and Oswald Garrison Villard (Knopf, $1.25). Lincoln as President-elect in the months before his first inaugural. A brief collection of daily dispatches sent to his bitterly anti-Lincoln paper, The New York Herald, by Henry Villard, who first thought Lincoln too small for the presidency but quickly reversed his judgment. Just passable journalism made important by a great subject.

HAWK'S NEST, by Hubert Skidmore (Doubleday, Doran, $2.50). Silicosis at Gauley Bridge, West Virginia. As a novel this is no great shakes, but as an indictment it about covers the story, from the desperation of hungry workers to the brutality of a company out to get its tunnel dug cheaply even if it means murder. A somber tale.

THE EARTH IS OURS, by Vilhelm Moberg (Simon and Schuster, $2.75). Translated from the Swedish. A trilogy that brings in the old conflict between two ways of life. Kurt Torling, successful editor, gives up his job, his home and his wife in Stockholm to return to the farm he had left as a boy. A fine, calm, warm-hearted novel, placid as a country landscape, and written by an author who has a piece to speak and clearly believes in taking his time about it.

RICHARD PRYNE, by Cyril Harris (Scribner's, $2.50). A workmanlike historical novel of the Revolutionary War dealing with American secret agents in New York during the British occupation. Good story-telling and credible characters nicely related to a period background that's authentic, satisfying and unostentatious.

LONG MEADOWS, by Minnie Hite Moody (Macmillan, $3). Memory takes a beating in this novel of pioneer Americans—a novel that begins in 1705 and holds on through the Civil War. Plenty of incident here for the bloodthirsty: Indian massacres, battles, theft, murder—plus all the incidental births and deaths a prolific family can manage during two centuries. A crowded, detailed panorama.

KING'S MASQUE, by Evan John (Dutton, $2.50). History and fiction take their bows together here. The locale includes Paris, Florence, Stockholm and America; the time is the end of the eighteenth century; the sympathy is focused on Marie Antoinette. Told with all Mr. John's skill at adding color and drama to an era that has a good deal to start with.

Contributors

MAX GISSEN, whose reviews have frequently appeared in The New Republic, has recently had access to important data bearing on the British shipping problem.

JOAN ADENEY is a young English poet who has published one book of verse, "Amber Innocent."

T. A. BISSON has been a member of the Foreign Policy Association research staff since 1929. He is the author of "Japan in China" and "American Policy in the Far East: 1931-1940."

BERGEN EVANS is an associate professor of English at Northwestern University and has contributed to The Atlantic Monthly, Scribner's, Esquire and other magazines.

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